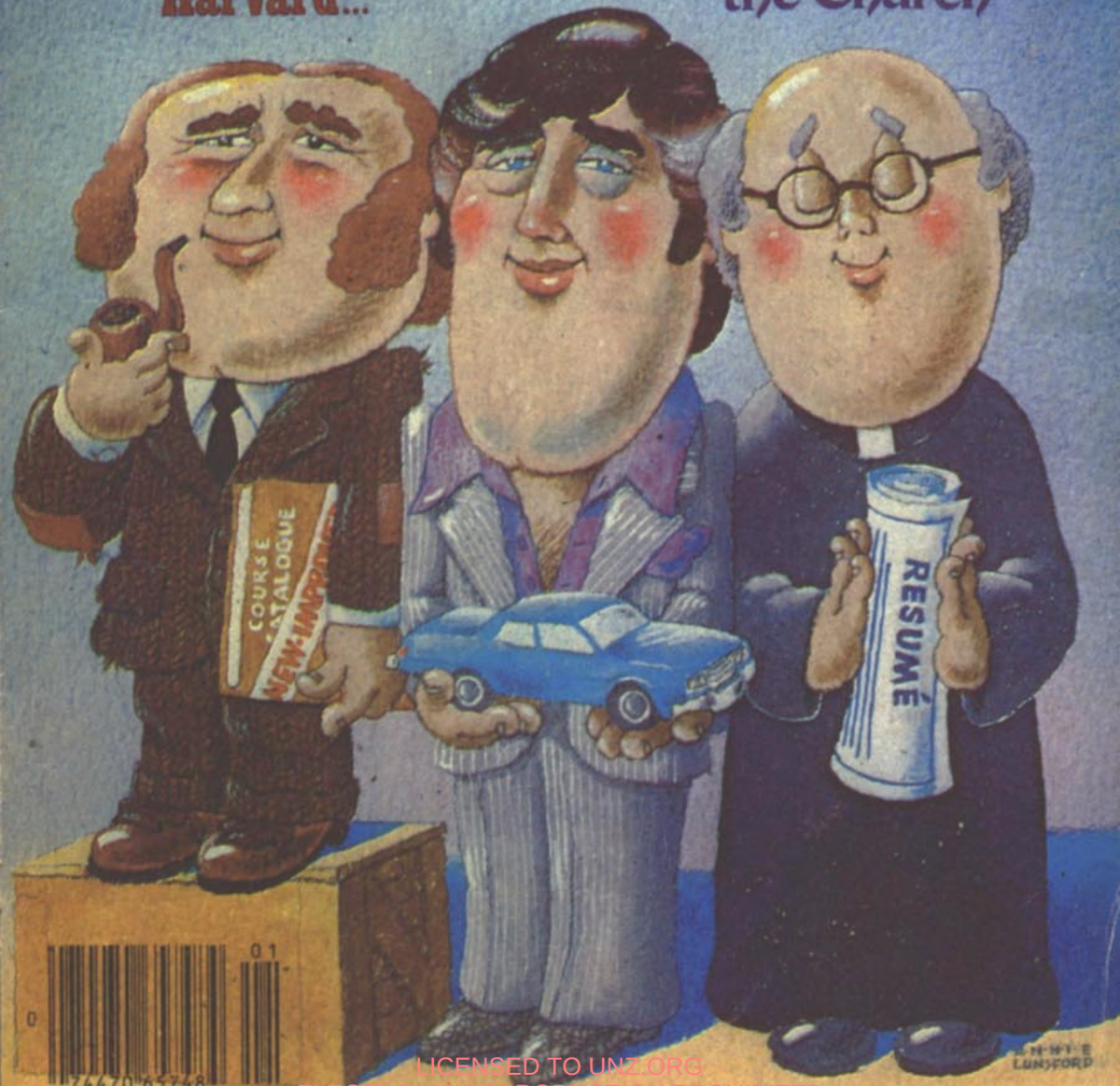
The Washington Monthly

JANUARY 1980/$2.00

THE MYTH OF THE SUCCESSFUL WOMAN

ON THE MAKE...

at Harvard... at General Motors... ...in the Church



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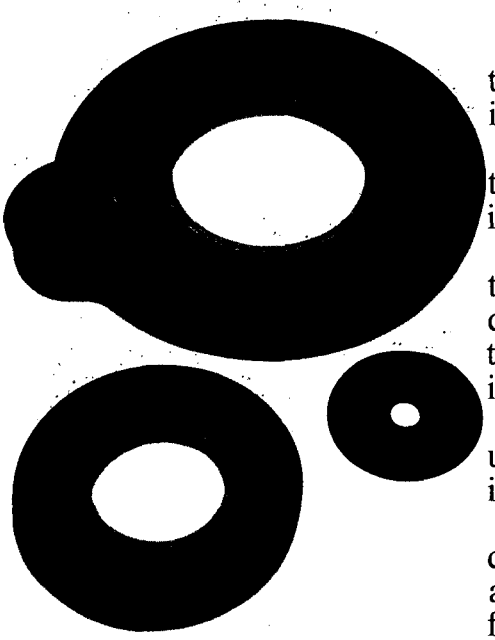

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Letters

The FAA Stalls Out

I commend Lester Reingold for "The Crashes of '79" [December 1979], an excellent article on air safety. His portrayal of the Federal Aviation Administration's chronic failures was clear and comprehensive.

J.J. O'DONNELL
Washington, D.C.

Mr. O'Donnell is the president of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA).

The Pilots Counterattack

You say the Federal Aviation Administration is spending $100 million to develop airports away from metropolitan centers "so all the drunken and incompetent private pilots will use them and not threaten commercial flights at major airports." ["Tilting at Windmills," October 1979]

This is grossly inaccurate. The $100 million is from a special aviation trust fund, raised by taxes on the users of airports. The money is not taken from general revenues.

Conversely, the public airports used by airlines cost billions to build, and are employed primarily by private carriers to make profits. The general public would not stand for bus companies getting the same payments for their terminals.

CHARLES SPENCE
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Spence is a vice president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

Dear asshole: I just read your comment about "drunken and incompetent" private pilots. Do you fly? Do you know anyone outside your cocktail party circuit who does? Not one of the private pilots I know will set off on any kind of trip if he has been drinking. FAA rules say you can't fly for eight hours after drinking; I for one touch no alcohol for 48 hours before I fly. Compare that against uniformed pilots in a bar I once frequented who, drunk out of their minds, would look at their watches and say, "Gotta go now, can't drink for eight hours before I fly." So they flew with a hangover.

I fly for pleasure, and resent having to acquire all sorts of garbage—I'm not allowed to land at many tax-supported airports because I don't have 500 pounds of junk like encoding altimeters, 720-channel radios, twin VORs and all that stuff one doesn't need in order to fly safely.

The PSA wreck in San Diego in 1978 was due to error on the part of your precious airline pilot, and ground control for trying to run things in three directions at once. But you won't buy that, because it doesn't sell magazines and doesn't make your bedpartner Ralph Nader happy.

DAVID J. MANN
San Francisco

Death of a Train

"Death of the Hiawatha" [December 1979] is a brilliant, cogent piece of reporting. How many times my family and I have tried in vain to buy tickets on a train between Denver and home in eastern Colorado. How many times we've been told there are no seats available. . . and then watched an empty train roll past.

L. E. SCOTT
New York

Hearts and Minds

In "Make-Work in Morocco" [November 1979] you say this of the International Communication Agency: "The idea that America needs an independent agency to promote what is the world's most pervasive culture is silly; as for winning hearts and minds, we should know by now that we'll be judged by what we do, not by what we say."

At ICA we think it our mission to increase understanding of our society among peoples abroad and vice versa. It is a difficult task, often fraught with discouragement verging on despair. Still, we try, in part because we are uneasy, to put it mildly, about the alternatives. If we can facilitate this effort by presenting aspects of U.S. culture that would otherwise be overlooked, we do so to the extent possible.

HENRY B. RYAN
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Ryan works in the Office of Congressional and Public Liaison at ICA.

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10TH ANNUAL BOOK AWARD

Each year *The Washington Monthly* recognizes the best book on politics and government published during the previous year.

Nominations must be received by January 21, 1980, for books published in 1979. The award will be announced in the Annual Political Book Award Issue, to be published in March 1980. Readers are invited to send nominations to:

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The Washington Monthly
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Tilting at windmills

We have a simple plan to clean up politics in America. It has two phases.

Phase One: Prohibit campaign contributions of more than $100 per person to any candidate, and require radio and television stations to give free time to candidates and devote a specific amount of time to campaign coverage. One hundred dollars is not going to make anyone beholden to anyone else, and the need for larger contributions will be eliminated if candidates are relieved of the cost of radio and television advertising.

Phase Two: Prohibit the packaged campaign commercials with their artfully edited films and tapes that make the most hapless wretch look like Redford and sound like Churchill. Candidates will still be free to say whatever they want—they'll just have to say it in their own words, and we'll have a chance, at least, of finding out who they really are. . . .

Speaking of radio and television, someone—I wish I could remember who—has recommended that the government auction off broadcasting licenses every ten years or so. This seems thoroughly sensible to me. Think what the taxpayers could get from the bidding for television channels in major markets. We might also apply the auction principle to other publicly granted licenses that confer some degree of monopoly right to the holder—such as the right to have one of a limited number of liquor stores or banks in an area, or a race track's right to exclusive racing days, or an air line's right to fly on the more lucrative routes.

We could make a lot of money that way. Or we could open all these businesses to free competition and *really* save the consumer a bundle. . . .

Another solution to the television station problem, suggested by my colleague Robert M. Kaus, is to elect their owners. The people who own these stations have tremendous power—granted to them by the public in their licenses. So why shouldn't the public be able to elect them, as it elects other people to whom it grants power? . . .

Watch for movies advertised as "Soon To Be A Major Paperback Book!" David Obst, the literary agent turned publisher, has moved his Simon & Schuster office from New York to Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. "Producers and studios have good ideas," he told Paul Nathan of *Publishers Weekly*. "Simon & Schuster has writers looking for good ideas. By being at the source I can find out what a studio or major producer wants to do next. If the project is what I think is a viable book, we can get studio financing for it." This is truly a great leap forward and long overdue. If only Paramount had financed *Moby Dick*, Melville doubtless could have been persuaded to write a scene for Jacqueline Bisset in a wet T-shirt up on that whale. . . .

An old friend of mine works for Jerry Brown and recently invited me to join the Governor for a couple of hours while he was in town. Having heard that he was the kind of man who would kick the cane of an old lady seeking nothing more than his autograph, I didn't expect to like him. But I did. I

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thoroughly enjoyed our conversation, perhaps partly because he's clever enough to turn an interview around and ask questions himself—questions that seem to reflect genuine curiousity about the person he's talking to. But he is more than clever. He is properly and intelligently suspicious of our most priestly professions. One of his heroes is Ivan Illich, who you may recall believes that an unseemly amount of illness is "iatrogenic"—brought on by the physicians themselves. To guard against the professionals' tendencies toward self-protection, Brown has put laymen on the boards of the California medical and bar associations. With his support, a state law has been passed requiring all disputes under $15,000 to be resolved by arbitration rather than in the courts. These are small steps, but anyone who challenges our adversary system of law—its expenses and encumbrances and its habit of generating hatred—has my respect.

On the other hand, two of Brown's answers left me dismayed. When I asked if he saw any problems with the civil service, he answered, "Didn't Carter's bill take care of that?" And when I asked him about his defense program, he said he didn't have one. . . .

The Milwaukee Road wants to abandon rail service on its unprofitable routes in the Dakotas, Montana, and Idaho. Columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman says that's fine—just be sure to give the land back to the government, from which, as you will recall, all the western railroads got it originally. Then we could auction it off, just like the TV stations. . . .

The White House in the Nixon-Ford years didn't do much for our political system, but it seems to have offered a first-rate course in Creative Writing 1600: *Roman a Clef* Suspense Thrillers. First there was one by John Ehrlichman, then another by William Safire, then another by Ben Stein, then *First Lady* by Ron Nessen. The remarkable thing is that all of these books have some merit, and Safire's *Full Disclosure* is a really fine thriller. . . .

The Senate, on the other hand, offers a different approach to publishing. In 1974 Doubleday gave Howard Baker a $22,500 advance for a novel. The book has never been written, but Doubleday is too polite to try to recover its money from the minority leader of the United States Senate. Baker has thus fulfilled the wildest dream of every writer: to get paid for a book without actually having to write it. . . .

The public school students in the District of Columbia placed in the bottom 20 per cent of all students in the nation who took the college board tests last year, with scores more than 200 points below the national average. In our May 1979 issue, Joseph Nocera explained why:

"It is pretty plain that the teachers here are a lot of the problem. Over the years, the D.C. public school system has hired a large number of people who don't know what to do in front of a classroom. . . . They got their jobs solely on the basis of an interview with someone in the school department personnel office. . . no tests were given prospective teachers, since the department stopped testing in 1969, and the union forbids school administrators from watching potential employees perform in a classroom before hiring them. Once hired, these teachers slid by for two years, after which they were tenured, and then built up seniority. *But they still couldn't teach.*"

Nocera went on to note an irony:

"There is a tremendous teacher glut in this country, with a lot of young teachers hungry for work, and the private schools have been getting most of them. They can test teachers if they want, audition them, take whatever steps they think are needed to insure they're getting the best teachers they can find."

This difference between private and public schools is, to use one of President Carter's favorite words, a disgrace. Karl Marx would find in it confirmation of his worst suspicions about the rich: they send their own children to private schools, and watch without uttering a word of

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protest while the children of the poor are miseducated by the incompetent.

This is not a problem that can be solved by throwing more money at public schools. District of Columbia public school teachers are already the highest paid teachers—public or private—in the Washington area. My wife works for a private school where the salaries are at levels that went out of style in 1935—roughly 60 per cent of what the public school teachers get—yet my wife's school is clearly superior. Why? Because its administrators can hire and fire strictly on the basis of competence.

This is the secret of good education—and it's time we let everybody in on it. It means we have to break the power of the teachers' unions. Nothing is more clear, yet no truth is more resisted by liberals who think they would forfeit their credentials if they took a stand against a union—*any* union. But if they troubled themselves to talk to public school teachers, they would find some good ones who agree that the leadership of the unions pays little or no attention to the quality of education—instead following the easy path to reelection by protecting the incompetents with job security provisions that are smothering our schools. . . .

Federal tax policies that encourage real estate speculation are generating a side effect that will be felt world-wide. According to Mary Thornton of *The Washington Star,* property trading is taking an average of three million acres of farm land out of agricultural use every year. At that rate, the $33 billion in annual food exports from the U.S. could shrink to zero by the year 2000. . . .

Last year we ran an article chiding the local YMCA for becoming an elitist health spa, with membership fees beyond the reach of the average man, let alone the poor. Its officials cried foul. This year, to appeal to the vital concerns of their community, they are offering a seminar in "Accumulating and Preserving Your Estate," always a topic of lively interest in the ghetto. . . .

In the weeks around Christmas *The New Yorker* is so jammed with ads for baubles and bangles one tends to forget the magazine also has editorial content. But it still does, and over the years it has published an exceptional collection of fine writing and common sense squeezed in among the sapphires and sables.

From the mid-forties until the mid-sixties *The New Yorker* probably had more influence on thoughtful Americans than any other periodical. In the realm of politics and government, that power was exercised with great care and much wisdom. The man responsible was Richard H. Rovere, who died a few weeks ago.

In my own case his influence was immense. I was 21 in 1948 when Rovere began writing his column, "Letter from Washington." I read, with profound respect and immense enjoyment, his lucid reporting on Joe McCarthy and his patient dissections of the Eisenhower/Nixon administrations. In 1967, when I began planning *The Washington Monthly,* he was the first person I asked to serve on its editorial board. He accepted, thereby investing the enterprise with enough credibility to help us attract good writers from the start. All he ever received in return for his advice was stock that never paid him a dividend, alas, but his advice was always good and the dividends it paid us are beyond measure.

A couple of months before our first issue was scheduled to go to press I was mired in an editorial swamp of manuscripts. Having commissioned them, I felt obligated to try to salvage them. Rovere was firm. If they're no good, throw them out, he said; accept that this is the only way an editor can survive, and get on with the task of finding fresh thinking that really reflects the purpose of the magazine.

Once we got the magazine established I saw him only infrequently, but his interest and encouragement continued. He was always there when we needed him, and we will always be in his debt.

—*Charles Peters*

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You have to kiss the right rings...

Making It in the Church

by Joseph Nocera

On June 14, 1971, Bernard M. Kelly left the priesthood after 27 years in the service of the Catholic Church. The late 1960s and early 1970s were troubling times for the American Church, and nothing showed that better than the enormous number of priests and nuns who were quitting in favor of the secular life. By 1971, the idea of a priest leaving the priesthood was no longer much of a shock, having happened so often that it had become one of those dog-bites-man stories.

But Kelly was different. Kelly wasn't just another priest calling it quits; he was a *bishop* calling it quits—and that was another story. The idea of a bishop resigning *was* still a shock; if you were a Catholic then, it was hard to imagine a bishop being wracked with the inner doubts and conflicts, the faith crises, the desire to get out from under the yoke of celibacy, the resentment and bitterness toward the Catholic hierarchy, all the things that were causing so many priests to resign. Bishops, after all, *were* the church hierarchy. With the possible exception of the apostolic delegate (the pope's personal representative in America), they were the most powerful men in the American Church, and the fact that this select group of men—numbering about 350—had made it to the top of the Church's hierarchy was no accident. Whatever else one can say about America's bishops, they are not men prone to quitting; there have been bishops in America since the mid-1800s, and only two have ever resigned.

So Bernard Kelly's resignation was big news in American Catholic circles, and nowhere was it bigger news than in Providence, Rhode Island, a heavily Catholic city where he was auxiliary bishop at the time of his resignation. *The Providence Journal* made it a front page story for several days (quoting Kelly to the effect

Joseph Nocera is a Contributing Editor of The Washington Monthly.

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that he was leaving because of "an abiding sense of frustration").

The crux of Kelly's problem was that he had changed; he had abandoned one set of values and replaced them with another, and the hierarchy of the church had not changed with him—nor was it about to. Sometime after he was made a bishop, Kelly, like a number of his fellow priests, had become "radicalized." First, there had been the Second Vatican Council, the five-year conference ending in 1964 that did more than any other single thing in the last 200 years to shake up the Church. The documents that came out of Vatican II were so broadly worded that interpreting them still provides the main battleground for Catholicism some 16 years later, but one thrust of the Council's basic message seemed clear enough: the Church—and its spokesmen, the priests and nuns—would have to get more involved in the problems of the real world, problems of poverty and hunger and social injustice. In political terms, this was undeniably a liberal message, and priests who were inclined to liberalism anyway (mostly, but not exclusively, younger priests) clasped it enthusiastically and looked for a chance to put it into practice.

They didn't have long to wait. Vatican II ended just as the civil rights movement was gaining momentum, and then there was the anti-war movement, and these priests plunged into the thick of things. A few couched their activities in terms like "gospel values" and "following the true message of Jesus Christ." But mostly they cited Vatican II as their inspiration. And auxiliary bishop Bernard Kelly, who had been the soul of priestly propriety for the first 20 years of his career in the Church, was right there with them.

In general (and this is a very broad generalization indeed), American bishops disapproved of such overt activism. Only one bishop, for example—John Wright of Pittsburgh—openly supported the priests in his diocese who wanted to join the famous Selma civil rights march. Most of the other bishops wanted their priests to act more "responsibly," to stay in their parishes, and to leave it to the bishops to decide how Vatican II ought to be interpreted. The bishop of Providence was not happy with his subordinate. Whatever else he felt about Vatican II, he certainly didn't see it giving *his* priests license to march in demonstrations.

He had ways of communicating this to Kelly. An auxiliary bishop is something like a vice president; the title sounds more impressive than the job turns out to be. Auxiliary bishops aren't all that necessary to the running of a diocese, and whatever real power they have is subject to the whim of the bishop. So it wasn't much of a surprise when Kelly found himself with no real work to do in the diocese other than the steady stream of ceremonial functions that can fill a bishop's time—like presiding over the confirmations that every parish holds in the spring. The bishop also froze Kelly out personally, refusing to speak to him or deal with him unless absolutely necessary, and doing things like not taking meals when Kelly was eating. At the semi-annual bishops' meetings, Kelly became anathema, someone the other bishops would say hello to in the hallway while they hurried on to more important business.

It is hard to imagine that there was any real chagrin among the other bishops when Kelly finally quit. He was, officially, a member of their exclusive club, but he had become a source of discomfort. He was too wrapped up in his social activism, too free with his criticisms of the Church. He was not one of them anymore. His career within the formal church was at a dead end; it was a make-work existence at best, something Kelly must have guessed would happen when he first started joining peace marches. And without a word being spoken, something else was clear too: here was someone who might once have been on the Catholic Church's fast track, but was now off it for good. In that sense, Kelly was out long before he quit.

God and the Fast Track

Words like "fast track" and "career" are not normally associated with the Catholic Church. It is not considered proper—within the Church or without—to talk about such material concepts in connection with a life devoted to God. One of the things drummed into seminarians right from the start is that ego-sublimation and selflessness are admirable qualities—indeed, necessary qualities in order to become a good priest. There is therefore a great tendency among priests, particularly when talking to outsiders, to play down the "career" aspect of their lives, to talk in

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terms of doing the Lord's work instead of their own. At one seminary, I was interviewing one of the school's deans, a man who had studied in Rome and had taught in a number of colleges, and I asked, "You've done pretty well in the Church, haven't you?" He replied: "I don't think of it like that at all. I've been blessed with good fortune, but I would be happy in whatever capacity I could serve the Lord." On another occasion, I was talking to a parish priest in Washington and I asked him what steps a man would take if he wanted to be bishop. "I would hate to see an article that focuses on that," he said. "None of the priests I know thinks about things like that."

I think both priests were being honest, but I also think their answers were a bit disingenuous. Careers do exist in the Catholic Church—as they must in a bureaucracy staffed, in effect, by lifetime officials. *Somebody* must run the Church, after all—and those who do enjoy substantial power, power to affect the future of the Church and the larger society as well. Looking at what sorts of people end up in those posts,and how they get there, can tell us a lot about what may be wrong with the Catholic Church as an institution today.

The seminary dean and the parish priest are right in this respect: the Catholic Church is not a place full of pushy, promotion-minded men who spend their days scheming to get to the top. Theoretically, at least, the Church frowns on ambition; indeed, there is hardly any point where the Church differs more from other organizations than in its seeming rejection of obviously ambitious men. In any organization, of course, it is not seen as especially good form to be too single-mindedly ambitious—to be focused solely on how quickly you can get ahead—but on the other hand, a man who is seen as having no ambition at all is usually suspected of lacking the fire in his belly necessary to do good work. One of the hard and fast beliefs of the Church is that driving ambition puts the wrong kind of fire in the bellies of its priests, that it is a detriment to doing the "Lord's work," and that it will lead to a pride in personal accomplishments that the Church believes is simply wrong.

But that's the catch. The Church insists it wants only men who don't care about getting ahead, and it will make it easy for truly unambitious men to have their wish come true. So the hierarchy is open to those people who have decided that getting ahead is something they wouldn't mind after all. The process by which they go about this must be subtle and not a little hypocritical; the hot young priests are forever denying their ambition even as they are figuring out their next step up the ladder. To be too out front about one's career goals—well, that is a sure-fire way to get *off* the fast track. (This is true even at the highest echelons of the Church; during last year's papal elections, for example, a number of Italian cardinals fared poorly in the balloting because the others thought they had campaigned, however subtly, for the job.)

As a result, the priesthood tends to attract two kinds of men: a minority who have personal goals and ambitions but who know enough to keep quiet about them even in their most private conversations, and the vast majority who genuinely don't have personal ambitions. (As an example of the latter, an interesting trend in seminaries these days is that older men, men in their thirties, forties and fifties, are dropping out of the secular life to join the priesthood. One seminary director I talked to went on at length about all the "highly successful businessmen" who had entered in the past year. These men complained that something was missing from their lives in the business world; they wanted out of the rat race. So it seems unlikely that they will join the Church's own version of the rat race once they are ordained.)

The reasons men—young or old—become priests are varied and complex, of course. The most obvious reason is the desire to get closer to God through the priesthood. Another strong motivation is surely idealism, the feeling that as a priest, a man really can do good for others and help make the world a better place. For someone so inclined, it is nice to be able to do it for a living. Still, there have always been other attractions, more *worldly* attractions. One of these is the idea of counseling—the same desire that draws people to become psychologists. Counseling can be benign and helpful, of course, but it can also be accompanied by the desire to manipulate. Merely advising important people, or being around people you admire (a pro football team, the Kennedys) confers a kind of power in its own right, and priests have been as susceptible as anyone to that.

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There also used to be some tangible reasons for joining the priesthood. For most of this century, but especially up to the end of the 1940s, the American Church was largely an immigrant church. It was perhaps the central element of many immigrant communities, particularly in big cities. The Church provided a home for people who had not yet been accepted by the rest of America. It brought them together, not just for church services, but for fairs and bake sales and Friday night bingo. The Church built schools and hospitals—and political organizations capable of electing mayors and congressmen.

The priesthood offered a way up from the bottom of the ethnic ghetto—if not a way out entirely, it did make the priest an important figure in those ghettos. (This was especially true of the Irish, who have traditionally dominated the American Church. Even today, when fewer than 17 per cent of the laity in the American Church are Irish, they still account for 35 per cent of its priests and over half of its bishops.) To become a priest meant knowing that the most basic kind of security would always be available—a warm bed at night, enough food on the table. It meant a good education, at no cost. Most of all, it meant respect. Within these tightly-knit communities, everybody knew the priest and recognized his social status—not only the poor widow who couldn't speak English, but the neighborhood businessmen and politicians, too.

That world is dying, of course, so the motivation to join the priesthood to escape the ghetto has died out also. Most priests in America today don't lack for much materially (though they take vows of poverty and their pay is exceedingly low, they don't need much money because the Church pays for virtually all their needs). But they also don't live demonstrably better than the middle class world from whence they came. Still, there is another kind of security the priesthood offers—the same kind of security that attracts men and women to the civil service. A priest doesn't ever have to worry about being fired. Once he is in, he is in for good; and Mother Church will take care of him. Whether he performs well or not will never become a major issue; if what usually accompanies lack of ambition is desire for security, the priesthood offers it in its purest form.

Up the Long Ladder

It is those other men, the ones who do want to do well in the hierarchy, who see the Church in terms of a career ladder.

The ladder starts at the level of the parish priest, the most traditional and visible role of priests in this country. In the American Church, a parish will have anywhere from two to ten priests, serving an area usually the size of a large neighborhood. One of these priests will be the pastor—he's the boss, he runs the parish, and he does it pretty much as he pleases; Church law puts restrictions on the extent to which a bishop can interfere with how a pastor runs his domain.

Most seminarians aspire to be parish priests and nothing else. After they have been in the priesthood awhile, and see firsthand how much better it is to be a pastor than a parish priest (that is to say, to be able to give a few orders instead of taking them all the time), they might hope someday to be named pastors themselves.

But those who do aspire to careers in the ladder-climbing sense will not want to stop at the level of pastor. Above the pastors are the Church's various bureaucracies, and they are where the hot young priests want to be. In the American Church, the premier bureaucracy—and the font of most power and prestige—is at the level of the diocese, of which there are 170. The bishop is the head of the diocese, and it is essentially his territory. (There is no hard and fast rule as to how large a diocese is. The diocese of Philadelphia, for example, encompasses much of eastern Pennsylvania, includes 308 parishes and over a million Catholics; the diocese of Washington, on the other hand, includes only the city itself and a part of suburban Maryland. It has 128 parishes and fewer than 400,000 Catholics under its jurisdiction.) Under the bishop are the auxiliary bishops and the diocesan bureaucracy, which works in a building called the chancery. It depends on the size of the diocese, of course, but an average chancery will employ a few hundred priests working in its various departments. (A typical chancery will have a dozen or so bureaus with titles like the Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs, the Vicar for Planning and Development, and the Vicar for Worship and the Laity.)

Another appealing career step for an up-and-comer is a job in the American

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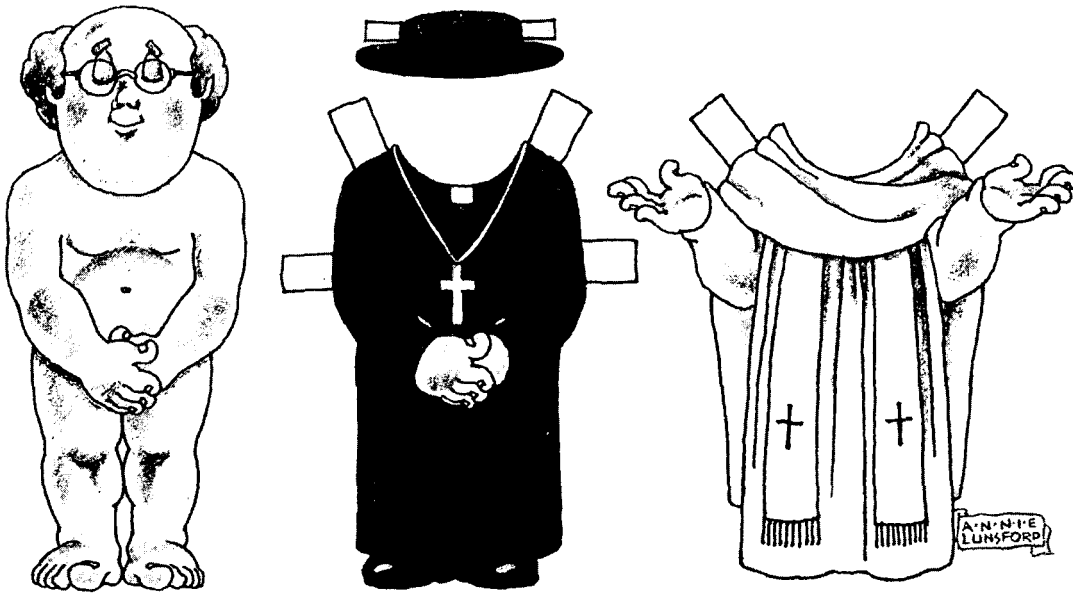

Church's national bureaucracy, called the United States Catholic Conference. A job at the USCC has considerable prestige value, more prestige than an important position in a diocese—but not as much real work. The USCC is headquartered in Washington (the better to lobby Congress, one of its main functions), and like most other Washington bureaucracies, it is featherbedded. It has one genuinely important project, called the Campaign for Human Development, designed to funnel contributions from American Catholics to the places in the world where the money is needed most. Aside from that, the USCC is full of the usual committees, subcommittees, and conferences, the latest of which, by way of example, is the Ad-Hoc Committee for Follow-Up to the Papal Visit.

Finally, there is Rome itself, the oldest and most entrenched bureaucracy in the world. Heads of Vatican departments are much like Cabinet secretaries; they take their orders from the pope, but also have a good deal of authority in running their divisions as they see fit. Other than the pope himself, these men are the highest ranking officials in the Church. They are invariably cardinals, an honorary title (in that it attaches to no specific job), but an extremely important one nevertheless. A cardinal is allowed to join the College of Cardinals, that select group of men (there are 128 of them) who can vote in a papal election. High ranking Rome officials have usually been bishops prior to their appointment to Rome; either that or members of the Vatican diplomatic corps, which is made up almost entirely of Italians and used to be (until the rules were turned topsy-turvy in 1978) the best route to the papacy.

Most Americans who do well in the Church never make it as far as the Rome hierarchy; at the moment, there are no Americans heading any Vatican bureaucracies. So for an American, getting ahead in the Church means getting ahead in the *American* Church—the highest he can reasonably expect to go is to be made bishop of a large and important diocese like Philadelphia, Boston, or New York. And, indeed, most American bishops are content if they rise that high; there's a sense among them that since they are American, they would just as soon stay here as move to Rome, where the bureaucracy has a reputation for being as stubborn and baffling and difficult to command as any in the world. At home, running a diocese, you have a kind of tangible power that can be more satisfying than a position, even near the top, in Rome.

Besides, a diocese *is* a large organization, and running it is a big job. A bishop today faces, in microcosm, all the problems confronting Catholicism—problems like how to handle the birth control and abortion issues, what to do about the declining number of priests, how to keep

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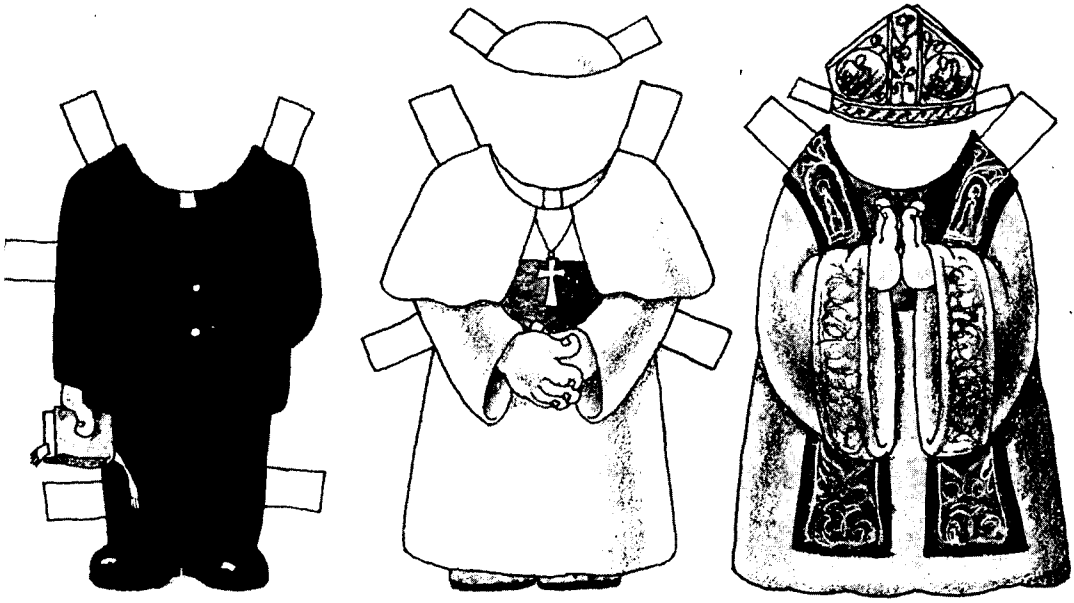

Catholic schools open, and the more general problem of how to fulfill the spiritual needs of the Catholics in the diocese. A good bishop has to be a good administrator. He has to be a politician and a financier as well as a spiritual director. Just as the pope sets the tone for the image of the Church in the world, so the bishop sets the tone for that image in his diocese. A good bishop can do a lot to inspire and invigorate a religious community, to help give it a sense of life and energy and commitment. He can be an important role model in a city, and a powerful voice. His position vests him with a certain moral authority, if he chooses to use it—and if he has the credibility.

Unfortunately, there haven't been very many particularly good bishops in America. Oh, there have been *important* bishops over the years; there have been great politicians and builders and power-brokers, the archetype being Francis Cardinal Spellman, who ran the New York diocese with an iron fist for 28 years, until 1967. But there haven't been many great spiritual leaders—men who lent the Church great moral authority when they spoke out on public affairs, or who served as an inspiration to the local priests and laity. Indeed, Andrew Greeley, the priest/sociologist, calls the current crop of American bishops a "collection of mediocrities," a statement with which most Catholics who follow Church politics would probably agree. Today, American bishops, with some exceptions, tend to be quiet and unobtrusive—preoccupied more with keeping the lid on problems in the diocese rather than with exploring new roles for the Church in the community and the world at large. That these are the men who run the Church is no fluke. They have, intentionally or unintentionally, done the right things, punched their tickets in the right place, in a system of promotion shaped, in large part, by the official tendency to deny that it exists.

Patron Saints

I was in college when Bernard Kelly quit, and although most of my interest in the Catholic Church had long since faded, I took more than passing note of the event. My family had known Kelly before he had been named a bishop. When I was confirmed in the fifth grade, he did the honors. That was a proud moment in my life—I was going to a parochial grade school, was an altar boy, and was generally a pretty devout Catholic. I was especially proud when my parents took me to the rectory after the ceremony for a chat with Kelly (something none of my classmates got to do, I was quick to notice).

I was very young when Kelly was promoted to auxiliary bishop, maybe nine or ten, but I do remember a sense of

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wonder among people who knew him. How had it happened? Why had he been chosen? Of all the priests in the state of Rhode Island, how was it that *he* had been singled out? The Holy Spirit got some of the credit, I'm sure, but no one was going to give God *all* the credit. There was a feeling that somewhere, at some point along the line, Kelly must have impressed *somebody*, and somebody pretty important, either in Rome or the Providence chancery.

These assumptions reflected the most important rule for making it in the Church: you need to know the right people. To be sure, that's a prerequisite for success in almost any organization. The young executive who plays golf with the company president is more likely to be promoted than the one who doesn't. But several idiosyncracies of the Church combine to make the patron-priest relationship *the* crucial factor.

First, movement in the Church hierarchy is invariably decided in absolute secrecy. Although the pope nominally makes the decision on naming a bishop, it's clear that he cannot have personal knowledge of every priest in America. But it is often never known, at any given moment, exactly who in the Church hierarchy has the pope's ear, or what they are telling him. This is one reason the Catholic gossip mills are always going full steam. No one in Rome will leak to the press that priest X was chosen over priest Y because Bishop Z pushed his candidacy. Even a new appointee himself may not be sure to whom in the Church hierarchy he owes his good fortune. All he knows is that someone up there was looking out for him.

Second, once a priest has been ordained, these unseen recommendations are made without the aid of any of the formal talent-searching mechanisms which pervade the secular world. There are no files kept on promising priests, no annual evaluations or merit review boards. Word of mouth is the prevailing system; so it is important what people say about you during dinner conversations and informal chats.

The result is that to even have a chance at climbing the ladder, a priest needs to find a powerful patron—or, preferably, a multiplicity of possible patrons—who will remember he exists, look out for his welfare and groom him for a position of power. A priest who otherwise observes the rules and keeps a low profile in a large diocese will likely sink from sight, never to be heard from again, unless he holds onto a rope leading to someone in the hierarchy in America or Rome.

In Kelly's case there had been plenty of chances to pick up patrons. He was well-known in Rhode Island even before he entered the seminary because he had been a track star in high school (a Catholic high school, of course), and his team, which he captained, had won a national championship. He was obviously smart, eager, and personable—and he was Irish, which didn't hurt. Before he was ordained, Kelly was sent to Rome to study. He got a doctorate in Canon Law, a specialty that has no practical use in a parish but *is* important if you want to work in a chancery. Like all priests, he spent some time in parish work, but it wasn't too long before he was teaching in the local Catholic high schools and the seminary. He then served a tour in the Vatican bureaucracy, and upon his return was named spiritual director of the diocesan seminary, a job that put him in continual contact with chancery officials, and presumably with the bishop himself. His early career, in other words, had been the very model of upward mobility, though he might not have said so even to himself.

The Incense Syndrome

The Church's patronage system starts right from go—at the seminary. Seminaries have changed a great deal in the past 15 years—the atmosphere is more relaxed, and seminarians have more personal freedom—but their primary purpose hasn't changed at all. They teach men to be priests, but even more importantly they weed out the men who the Church decides shouldn't be priests. Although the number of seminarians has dropped by nearly 60 per cent in the past decade—from 33,000 to fewer than 14,000—seminaries have not become less selective.

Because there is no one set of standards in the American Church governing the qualities that make a good priest, each diocese has a great deal of leeway in deciding who will make it and who won't. The process can get pretty arbitrary, so it is best to stay on the good side of your vocation director, the chancery official who has the final say on whether or not you should be ordained, and your seminary

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spiritual director. But otherwise, the main criterion (if you can call it that) is that the seminarian be "normal." Since, in our society, there is something a little unusual about any man willingly giving up sex, seminaries tend to be a mite suspicious of anyone who enters. All prospects take a battery of psychological tests before being admitted. And once they are in, they are all under constant scrutiny—from their teachers, and even from the other students. In some dioceses, students evaluate each other—in writing—at the end of the year. (Seminarians tend to complain the most about this aspect of seminary life. Because they live with their fellow students and their teachers, they feel that they can never really relax completely. They must always be on guard, lest they do something someone else considers "unpriestly.")

What is especially important, in this drive for normalcy, is to avoid showing any kind of excess. Whether it be too big an ego, or a terrible shyness, or even an excess of time spent in prayer, anything that separates one from the norm is not going to help one's chances of becoming a priest. Men who say they have had sudden striking religious experiences are always suspect. (That is why the charismatic movement, which is the revivalist wing of Catholicism, does not have any credibility in the formal culture of the Church. The idea of having the other-worldly revelations from God that charismatics say they experience is something foreign to most priests, and indeed, seminarians who make too much of such experiences are likely to be asked to leave.) Seminaries like students who have found Christ *gradually*, not suddenly. Seminary directors are also on the lookout for candidates who are attracted to the priesthood because of its trappings—the "incense and candles syndrome." Those people don't last long either.

Other than keeping down the excesses, what exactly defines a "normal" seminarian is hard to pin down. But there's not much doubt that seminarians have changed over the years. Two decades ago, seminaries were full of brawny Irishmen—local athletic heroes like Bernard Kelly—who came out of that ethnic immigrant Church culture. Today's seminarians tend to be more introspective, less likely to want to throw around a football or basketball, more serious about their work or their life. Indeed, more than one seminarian told me that you start with a great advantage in the seminary today if you happened to have played football or some other sport in high school. In the eyes of the instructors, here will be the one guy in the class who seems *really normal*, the reason being, of course, that he is the one guy who reminds his teachers of themselves when they were seminarians.

Something else happens in the seminary, too, and only the most naive fail to pick it up. There will be one, maybe two, members of the class who seem to hit it off with the head of the seminary or the spiritual director. They'll usually be bright, some of the better students in the class. They also won't be particularly tormented about whether women should be ordained priests or whether *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI's famous 1968 birth control encyclical, was right or wrong. Even before the members of a seminary class are ordained, it becomes clear that these are the seminarians with the best shot at the fast track. Because of their friendship with their seminary director—because they have found that first key patron—they will be the ones who get the assignment to study in Rome before they are ordained. Without that, future good assignments are nearly impossible.

Be a Lawyer

In the priesthood an assignment to Rome to study at the North American College there is usually thought of as the equivalent of going to Harvard. Actually, it's far more important. Studying at the North American College carries the same prestige as the combination of West Point and the National War College would carry for someone trying to make general.

Besides supplying a vital line on the *curriculum vita*, the North American College provides a chance to look for patrons among the Rome bureaucracy. Classes are small enough (about 40 students are admitted each year) to permit close contact with a few teachers, who are in turn able to make introductions to people in power.

A degree from the North American College in something like Canon Law (which effectively makes you a Church lawyer) provides the best platform for an ambitious priest. It doesn't seem to matter very much where you rank in class, unless you are conspicuously close to the bottom.

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One priest who occupied that spot remembers that at the tenth reunion of his class he was the only one who had not been named monsignor (another of the Church's purely honorary titles, a step above priest, but important as a sign that a priest has been singled out for recognition by his superiors). By the time his 25th reunion came around, he was still on the slow track while all of his classmates had been named bishops, or at least auxiliary bishops.

The next step after ordination for almost every priest is a stay in a parish, or preferably two parishes in succession—serving as a parish priest in the first, and as pastor in the second. The Church sees parish work as so fundamental that every priest should spend some time at it; exceptions are rare. Even the most upwardly mobile priest recognizes the importance of parish work—it is the one time in his career when he will be mingling with the laity, the one time he will be doing those things that we think of priests as doing: saying Mass in the small hours of the morning, hearing confessions, administering the sacrament, visiting the sick, guiding the religious education of Catholic children.

As a parish priest it is important that your pastor like you. You will probably live in the same house, under his watchful eyes. As in the seminary, you will be assessed on the basis of how you live your life and whether you are compatible with his ideas more than by any objective evaluation of the job you do. It is important to follow the pastor's rules, no matter how trivial; to accommodate his eccentricities; and, most of all, to agree with him wholeheartedly on all questions of relevance to the Church, whether theological or political. Nothing can sidetrack a promising career faster than to acquire a reputation as a "doubting Thomas"—no matter how ironic the label.

When you become a pastor, the same rules apply. You have to be able to show your bishop the skills he admires—probably the same skills he showed when *he* was on the way up: skills as an administrator, skills in extracting significant contributions from wealthy parishioners, and skills in building—if not entire new buildings, at least you must be able to keep the church and rectory in good repair. Most of all, you must demonstrate a capacity for keeping the lid on any potential problems. A big public fracas involving you and your congregation is another sure way to stop your career in its tracks.

Before the late 1960s, the parish was merely a way station for a priest on the fast track—just as an aspiring executive in Detroit might put in some time supervising an assembly line before moving on and up as quickly as appearances would allow. This was especially true in the days when Cardinal Spellman and other men of his ilk were in charge. He and three or four other bishops would meet to decide upon a new appointment whenever there was a vacancy in the ranks. Then they would tell the apostolic delegate whom to choose. During this period, the thing to do was to get out of the parish as soon as possible and move into the chancery of one of those powerful bishops. There are bishops and auxiliary bishops across the country, members of that ambitious minority of priests, who maneuvered 20 years ago to serve in Spellman's chancery, because it was no big secret that if he noticed you and liked you, you were on your way.

That was before 1972, however, when Jean Jadot, a veteran Vatican diplomat, became apostolic delegate, and when the hierarchy in Rome began to place increasing emphasis on "pastoral" experience (culminating in the selection of John Paul I and John Paul II, two "pastoral" popes). Previous apostolic delegates had begun the process of wrestling control over appointments from the American bishops, the first sign coming toward the end of Spellman's reign, when in 1961 John Krol was appointed bishop of Philadelphia and Spellman found out about it when he read his *New York Times* that day. Jadot, by all accounts, has completed the task begun by his predecessors, and there is no doubt now that he is the man in charge. (Much to the chagrin, it is said, of Krol, who had envisioned himself becoming the next great power broker in the Spellman mold.)

In particular, Jadot is credited with enforcing the preference for parish experience in his choice of bishops. And American bishops, however grudgingly, have learned to accommodate his passion for pastors. For one thing, they are keeping their proteges in parishes for longer terms, and keeping their time in the chancery to a minimum. But, since Jadot must rely on bishops for advice, their patronage is still vital. So while pastoral experience has become increasingly important, some time spent in the chancery is still a must if one wants to cultivate the bishop—preferably

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in a job like personal secretary, where you are likely to be noticed long before you get tainted by too much desk work.

The chancery, however, is not the only way to meet a patron. A stay at the United States Catholic Conference can be useful, since it brings you into contact with bishops all the time. Bishops serve on most of the USCC committees so you can get the attention of a bishop by being the staff member of one of his committees.

Finally, you can spend a tour of duty in the Rome bureaucracy at the middle levels. At this point in a priest's career, Rome is a lot like the Pentagon for a rising major, a place where he can make a name for himself in an arena where there are a lot of higher ranking officials watching his performance.

If everything works out, and you've cultivated your superiors at every step of the way, whether by acting as a "yes-man" or showing a genius for handling tougher political problems, one of your patrons will find the right friendly ear, and you will receive one day your appointment as either an auxiliary bishop in a large diocese, or a bishop in a small one. Of the two possibilities, the latter is preferable—since as an auxiliary bishop, you must still stay on good terms with your superior if you want to avoid the fate of Bernard Kelly. As a full bishop you are free to run your diocese and attract the attention of anyone of influence in the Church hierarchy. As a result, bishops of large dioceses are usually priests who impressed Rome as bishops of small dioceses.

That, for example, is what happened to William Cardinal Baum, the current archbishop of Washington, and a man whose career has been one smooth step up the Church ladder after another. Baum had received a doctorate in Rome and then worked for a short time in a parish. During Vatican II, his Roman connections were good enough that he was made an advisor to the Council, and was one of the people behind the scenes who helped to write the documents that came out of it. (During the years of Vatican II, there simply was not a better job for a young, ambitious priest in all of Catholicism. The contacts made then were important, and the friendships lasting, since the participants felt they had been through an extraordinary experience together. As one of them would move up the ladder, he would try to move his friends up too.) During the late 1960s, when ecumenism was the hottest topic in Catholicism, Baum was right there: he was the executive director for the U.S. Catholic Conference's Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. In 1970 he was named auxiliary bishop for the Springfield, Missouri, area, and four years later was promoted to Washington.

Baum is not, in any sense of the word, a great leader of the Church; what people know him for is his general love of the good life. Articles about him always mention his love of fine wines, his penchant for travel (his favorite city is supposed to be London), and his refined tastes. When he first moved to Washington, he had the diocese buy him a $500,000 house, but after loud protests from some activist Catholics, Baum relented—buying a $250,000 house, and claiming that with the social duties required of a bishop, especially a bishop in Washington, he couldn't possibly live in anything less expensive. Articles about Baum also mention his intellectual breadth, and his fondness for conservative theological views. (He has been known to say "Women will never be ordained in the Roman Catholic Church," a statement that no doubt pleased his fellow bishops.)

And inevitably, they mention his ability to run a diocese the way Rome wants one run. When he arrived in Washington, Baum inherited a jurisdiction that was considered one of the most unmanageable in America. In the late 1960s there had been an enormous public struggle between the bishop and about 30 of his priests—many of whom were considered "comers"—over *Humanae Vitae*. The result of that nasty fight was that most of the dissenting priests left the priesthood rather than recant their disagreement with the encyclical, which the bishop was demanding as a proof of their faith. Their departure left the chancery in disarray, and left the bishop without much credibility among Catholics in Washington, the vast majority of whom believe—as do Catholics all over America—that the Church is just plain wrong on the issue of birth control. What Baum has done is calm things down, keep a low profile, keep the Washington diocese out of the news. Now the rumors are that since he has done so well in Washington, he will be heading back to Rome soon, for a new promotion to head one of the major bureaucracies. One of the people he befriended during Vatican II, it turns out, was a Polish priest named Karol Wojtyla.

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Draining the Reservoir

It's not easy to judge the system in which Baum has fared so well. The Church, after all, is not a government; it does not measure its success by popularity, but by how it carries forward the work of God as it is given to understand that work. Still, I think it's possible to draw some conclusions about the effectiveness of the Church as an *institution* without bumping up against bedrock questions of religious belief. One criterion that suggests itself is this: How well does the church encourage those within the organization, at all levels, to do their best to help the organization survive and perform its essential functions?

Here the Church clearly starts out with a natural advantage—the reservoir of idealism that has so often motivated men to join the priesthood in the first place. Properly replenished by encouragement from the hierarchy, that reservoir should supply even the most humble parish with a quality that is missing in so much else of society. To appreciate the possibilities, think what a school system could become of it could tap a supply of teachers primarily dedicated to the education of their students—instead of worrying about fringe benefits or how to get out of the classroom into a supervisory assignment.

Unfortunately, there is nothing in the Church's present structure that reinforces this willingness to serve. In part, this is because it is difficult to measure when priests, at the grassroots level, are doing "their best." Their job is to comfort the sick, hear confessions, administer the sacrament, and generally inspire people to a renewed faith in God. Most of the Church hierarchy seems to believe that success in these activities that come under the general heading of "ministering" is impossible to measure.

One result of this reluctance to judge other priests on the basis of their work is that while a priest is probably over-evaluated in the seminary, he is probably under-evaluated once he is ordained. In the word-of-mouth system that rewards and punishes priests, success at "ministering," rarely comes into the picture. In deciding whom to reward with a promotion, or special recognition, Church officials do value certain objective skills—the ability to administrate, to complete a project, to raise money and build. But it is almost inconceivable that a bishop would sit down with a pastor and ask if the bishop's young protege was "good with the flock." Those are not the qualities that lead priests to become proteges in the first place—and there is no system for searching out those qualities in the priests who have foregone the "fast track" for a life of service.

One way to measure the more ineffable aspects of a priest's work, of course, would be to ask "the flock" itself. Does he comfort the sick or do they find him cold and harsh? Do his sermons inspire or do they induce slumber? Priests needn't be judged by straw polls or by measuring the attendance at their mass—but the men who run the church could inquire as to whether their troops are performing the tasks they are supposed to, and reward those who are.

That isn't done, and the result is the clear and growing rift between the priests at the parish level and the bishops and assistants who staff the chanceries. Those at the bottom increasingly view the top positions in the hierarchy, not only as undesirable, but irrelevant. The parish priests realize that despite the recent emphasis on pastoral experience, the main prerequisite for entrance into the Church's higher echelons continues to be friendship with someone who's already there. Priests are full of stories about how various bishops made it (there is a great, obsessive fascination with the subject within the Church)—how Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia became the chauffeur and friend of the apostolic delegate, how another bishop carried the bags of his patron for years waiting for a chance to become bishop himself. The priests tell these stories among themselves in the spirit of good, clean fun, but there is a cynical side to it as well. The storytellers know that the hierarchy is busily reproducing a new generation of leaders that is a copy of itself in almost every respect. If their patrons liked priests to wear frock and collar in public, they will be the ones who wore the frock and collar, even if the vast mass of priests have long since dispensed with this everyday uniform.

Most of all, what breeds the sense of cynicism in the lower levels of the Church is the feeling priests get that their work product—what they do for a living in the name of Jesus Christ—seems to count for so little in the hierarchy. Priests, of course, are supposed to be selfless men, not caring

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whether their superiors appreciate them, secure in their faith in God, and the knowledge they are doing His work. But no man can be *that* selfless; it is part of human nature to want approval—not necessarily promotion, but some sort of sign that one's work has been noticed and appreciated. Instead, priests look around them and see a hierarchy full of yes-men, moving up the ladder because of whom they know, and because they connived to know them. It becomes so . . . *galling* to see others getting ahead who clearly have not been better priests. That is what makes the parish priests so cynical; and indeed, that is why so many of them burn out after 10 or 15 years in a parish. It is not just that the work itself becomes repetitious and humdrum (although that certainly is a factor, particularly in a suburban Amercan parish); it is much more the feeling that you have been giving your all for so long and *nobody cares.*

If these priests are motivated to service in the course of their ministries, it is partly because they feel that if the tree is rotting they must keep the roots alive. Many priests have reached the point in their relations with their bishops where they simply do what they want, without asking the bishop, because they believe, quite simply, that they know what is right and their bishops don't. One small example of this came at the latest meeting of the American bishops in November. The bishops debated at great length a resolution which would have authorized priests to remove from the liturgy any language considered "sexist." After the lengthy, arcane arguments that traditionally accompany interpretations of the canon law governing the liturgy, the resolution went down to defeat. What was absent from the debate was any sense that the bishops were discussing an issue that the priests at the parish level had already confronted, and resolved, by quietly making the language change on their own without asking for permission. It was another indication not only that the bishops were several steps behind their subordinates, but that they had no idea what their subordinates were doing.

In terms of institutional vitality, this system serves the Church poorly—at the upper levels as well as the lower. The men pulled up the ladder by the accumulated magnetism of their patrons are not necessarily the sort of people you would want to guide a massive organization in a rapidly changing social climate. They are selected, in effect if not intent, for their imitative qualities. At some point in their careers, probably pretty early, they had to face the fact that they could either choose to go along with their potential patrons, or forget about getting ahead. They chose going along, and that has been their guiding principle ever since. They will be responsible men, suited to the job of keeping the peace that has become the prime measure of priestly success. But they are not likely to be great innovators—quite apart from their views on birth control or women. They will tend to share the same skills—building, for example—as their predecessors, even though the need for those skills is not nearly as important as it once was. They will not be the men who are apt to think of new ways to solve the crisis of the parochial schools, the problem of declining communities, of a dwindling priesthood, even though those may be problems which they themselves realize are important.

Those men may be in the priesthood, but if they are, they are probably trapped in the lower echelons. "I know at least ten priests in this diocese who would have made great bishops," a parish priest told me. "Not just holy—really *dynamic* people. Men who can inspire their parishioners. Men who are leaders. But it will never happen—they don't want anything to do with the chancery and the chancery doesn't want anything to do with them."

The more priests I talked to, the more I heard variations on this same theme. I suspect there is a measure of hyperbole in what these priests say (we all like to think *our* friends are dynamic, the other guy's friends are a bore) but I also suspect that, in large measure, they are right. What the Church leaders seem to want is what they get: men who have conditioned themselves to blind obedience, if not obsequiousness; men in whom the spark of originality and daring has long since been snuffed out. That is why the Church will reward a William Baum and drive the Bernard Kellys from its midst. Until the Church learns to harness the idealism of its priests—to reward the good ones, even at the risk of stirring up the kinds of controversies within the Church that would inevitably acompany fresh thinking—it will continue to fail its members, its community, and itself. ■

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Tidbits & Outrages

Besides, Carter won't allow disco in the Situation Room

During the height of the Iranian crisis, Lisa Minnelli and Andy Warhol were entertained by the Moroccan embassy. Here are some excerpts from *The Washington Post's* account of the party:

"National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was there doing a little disco dancing with some glamorous partners... His wife Emilie called his night off from the situation in Iran 'taking the long view of the crisis'... Brzezinski sported a somewhat flattened hair style, thanks to the White House barber, he said. 'My wife said I goofed—she usually cuts it.'

"Treasury Secretary G. William Miller decided Minnelli was 'good for the economy—she's got lots of bounce.' Which she displayed nicely in a glittering blue Halston gown that provided plenty of fresh air.

"Brzezinski declined to recommend his White House barber to Andy Warhol, even though some people thought Warhol's white hair was hanging crooked. Warhol escorted the widow of former Brazilian ambassador Elizinha Goncalves, around whose neck half-dollar-size rubies and diamonds clung together in a spectacular necklace. It came close to achieving its desired effect. 'Would you like me to be discreet or knock Washington dead?' Goncalves reportedly asked Warhol before they started out for the evening. 'Knock Washington dead,' Warhol replied."

For another $5,000 you get high school sports

Washington entrepreneurs produce a multitude of specialty newsletters that, for several hundred dollars a year, provide "insider" information often hauntingly similar to stories appearing in the local papers.

Now there's a bold new champion in the field. It's called *Access*. It supplies 250 pages of news clips—just the clips themselves—a day, and costs $18,000 a year.

You're in luck, Hector, the clinic has a vacancy

On the 27th day of the Iranian crisis, November 29, *The New York Times* ran a photograph of Hector Campara, the former president of Argentina. The caption explained he was "en route to Mexico for cancer treatment."

And even though they're not nutritional, that doesn't mean we can't call wood chips Bread Boosters

Union Carbide and DuPont are preparing competitors for STP's "Gas Treatment" fuel additive, according to *Ad Age*. Many people mistakenly believe fuel additives improve gas mileage, when in fact what they do is clean engines. So, *Ad Age* reports, the companies will "position" their products honestly by touting only their engine-cleaning properties.

The products' names? "Gas Miser" and "Gas Booster."

And sales of nasal sprays are booming

Rexall Drug Co. reports college students bought 20 per cent more vitamins in 1979 than in the previous year. A spokesman explained students recognize that "the effects of their lifestyle, which includes drinking, smoking, dieting, and birth-control pills, require the intake of vitamin supplements."

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The ad begins "Dear Friend"

Prentice-Hall walks away with this year's Robert Ringer Award for its book, *Survival: A Manual on Manipulating.* The book promises to teach readers to "totally dominate and control the lives of others—manipulate their actions as though they were mere robots!" Helpful advice: "Use slander and deception to eliminate dangerous competition... manipulation can help you survive the depersonalization of modern life."

"If you're still trying to win through the old-fashioned principles of honesty and hard work," the book warns, "you're just not going to make it."

And if a just-indicted official slays 10 on an airplane that crashes into a factory...

Baffled readers often wonder how editors value different kinds of news. United Press International has made a welcome attempt to clarify this question. UPI recently sent radio customers a memo explaining the fees it pays for information. The stringer who phones in the first report of "an industrial explosion or fire that kills many people, or a major train or airplane crash" gets $50. UPI pays only $20, however, for news of "a mass murder or the indictment of a well-known public official."

No tank car is totally safe, all the time, everywhere...

Stories of small town residents being routed in the night by advancing clouds of toxic gas—released by a derailed tank car—seem disturbingly common. One reason emerges in a recent report by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The government used to require toxic or volatile chemicals to be carried in steel-reinforced 11,000-gallon tank cars. In 1968, however, industry lobbyists quietly succeeded in getting the rules relaxed to permit carrying such chemicals in 33,000-gallon cars without reinforcements.

The traditional symbol—two Barbary Coast pirates slashing each other's throats—is much harder to blow in glass.

Steuben Glass is selling a small crystal pig for $425. Ads say the figurine makes a nice present for executives because "pigs are symbols of good luck in business."

Mail Chauvinism

Overlooked in the swirl of world events is the fact that America has a crisis with Iran. We can't get the mail through.

Longshoremen's unions, it seems, refuse to load anything bound for Iran. The postal service applied Yankee ingenuity by shipping mail in bogus containers, which were removed after they left U.S. docks. But that ploy was discovered.

On Dec. 1, they managed to get a load of airmail out to Iran on a Pan Am jet. Pan Am's unions are a little less sensitive.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is making pitches to other countries to see if they will serve as a haven for Iranian mail. Letters would be shipped to them; then relabelled for Iran. Canada looked promising, but it backed out. Turkey is a possibility. No word on whether President Sadat is willing to take the mail in.

A postal service official explained that Americans are discovering their true mettle through the effort. "In any other country, they'd just shred the mail up, or throw it in the ocean. But Americans don't work that way. We have a moral commitment to get the mail through."

Strive Diligently to Overcome Unsightly Fat

The Justice Department has a room full of barbells and mats that some might call a gym. Justice, however, calls it an Occupational Health and Fitness Program Facility. When lawyers go down to the OHFPF for a workout, they can buy a T-shirt imprinted in block letters with the breezy slogan: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND FITNESS PROGRAM PHYSICALLY FIT INDIVIDUALS ARE HAPPIER HEALTHIER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE.

Another reason not to equip cars with air bags

Jacques Mesrine, the French master criminal and terrorist, was killed recently by French police. They found him driving through a crowded Parisian square, and shot him through his car's windshield.

Mesrine, who carried two grenades with him at all times, had sworn to take police with him when he went. But he could not reach the grenades, according to the *International Herald Tribune*, because he was wearing his seat belt.

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Mothers & other strangers

by Deborah Fallows

I've just finished reading another exuberant article about Successful Women. It featured variations on a theme familiar by now to everyone who reads magazines: A woman breaks into what has traditionally been a man's profession, works long hours, earns a big salary (usually more than $35,000 a year) and, if she is married and has children, hires full-time help so she can spend "quality" time with her family.

This particular article was striking only because of its air of jubilation; one reads about successful women all the time these days. Four times a year, my college alumnae magazine brings me the latest thumbnail life-reports from up-and-coming bankers, doctors, lawyers, professors, authors, and government people. In the June issue, for instance, I read the following about members of the class of 1970:

"*Married*: Elisabeth McKinsey to Thomas N. Clough. Elisabeth is assistant professor of English and American Literature at Harvard, and Thomas is in a doctoral program at Harvard Business School. . . . Lindsay Ann Crouse to David Mamet. Lindsay recently appeared in a number of plays and films. David is a playwright of the critically-acclaimed plays, *American Buffalo* and *A Life in the Theatre*. . . . Kathleen Moreno to Dr. Henry L. Dorkin. Hank is a fellow in pulmonary medicine at Children's Hospital in Boston and Kathleen plays harp with the Opera Company of Boston and the Philadelphia Orchestra at Saratoga. . . ."

Deborah Fallows works at Georgetown University and is the mother of a young boy.

When I encounter Successful Women like these in magazine articles, their lives sound seamless and perfect. They insist that if it came to a hard choice, the family and children would come first—but it never seems to come to a hard choice. There is no room for a sick mother requiring care, or for a husband who isn't supportive and helpful, or for serious and unexpected problems with the children. These women haven't had to give up anything they really wanted.

One reason for the smooth surface, of course, is that these women tend to have much more money than most people, and so they can afford to hire full-time help. Even when a mother chooses to work only part-time, she can still afford full-time help if she is a highly-paid professional. So she's still free to stay late at the office, or to go back in an emergency. She doesn't have to divide her free time between kids and household chores, because someone else cleans and cooks for her. To the extent that it's possible to have it all, money is the means.

But even in the most toast-of-the-town female success stories, there's something left out. We photograph these women only from their best angles—and we crop out the choices they make and the costs they pay.

I'm glad to be part of a generation of women who are free to make choices about careers and families. However: as far as I can tell, the seamless web of family-and-prestigious career just doesn't work. At some point, you have to sit down and decide whether to conduct your life in pursuit of money, status, power. . . or

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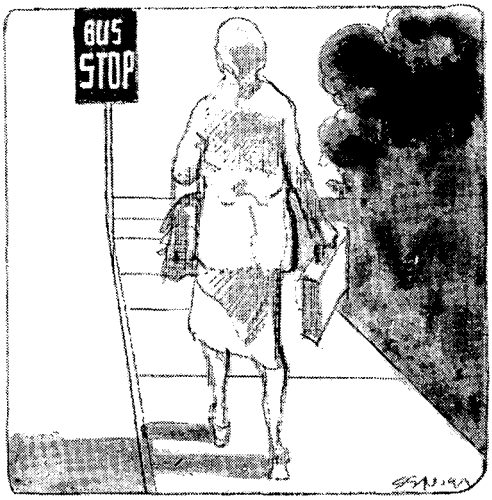

something else. The *something else* is hard to describe, because it's not part of the official story of my generation of women. But I know it's there.

Rush Hours

Our household runs fairly smoothly. On our best days, the most I have to feel guilty about is sending our son off to nursery school on a bowl of Cheerios rather than the steaming oatmeal I would love to prepare, if only there were time. But on other days—which occasionally drag into weeks, and which we try to pass off as "just a phase"—I have more to worry about. On those days, there are signs of strain that surface in various ways: our son's whining insistence that, *No,* he doesn't want to go to the babysitter's; asking hopefully whether it's Saturday today; his determination to slow down the whole hurried morning process, screaming when I try to change his soggy pajamas and put on clean school clothes, pulling his shoes and socks off as soon as I put them on and doing everything possible to postpone our departure through the front door.

I would love to humor him at these moments, to let him sleep late on overcast mornings, to let him play with his trucks and dawdle over his breakfast; but there is no time. I must be at my job before 9:00, which means we must leave the house before 8:30, which means he must start moving by 7:30 without fail. Certainly some of his balking is part of being two years old, and certainly he would do many of these things whether or not I worked. But I can't help feeling that my decision to work full-time this year has something to do with it. A child seems to sense unerringly when he is being rushed, when there's something on mommy's mind other than reading him a book or helping him assemble his train. Sometimes a child must be rushed, but I hate the thought of rush becoming the norm, replacing the sense that the child's parents have all the time and love in the world to give.

The imprint a woman makes on her family's lives is personal and private and not even much valued by the world beyond those few affected. A mother's efficiency and organization in running a household isn't particularly noticed (it's expected, taken for granted), but the care she puts into it is. To me, this means things like keeping our family traditions: making Czech dumplings on winter nights and fruitcakes for Christmas, compiling scrapbooks of the children's early years, and making special Halloween costumes they'll have fun thinking up and wearing (this year the costume came from F.W. Woolworth). It's a presence that is not always noticed but would be missed if it were not there, providing the things that make each family distinct and that make up so many of the memories of one's own childhood. In these things, there is no substitute for time and a mother's touch.

The more glamorous portraits of the Successful Woman are not faithful to her whole life because they underrate the things she has given up—homely things that are important to women with different values.

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I began working full-time during the summer, after our son turned two. Earlier in the summer, I had taken him to the swimming pool—something we both enjoyed immensely—nearly every day. By late summer, he proudly shed his plastic water wings and developed a dog paddle which (to my eyes) was as good as any four-year-old's. Nearly two months later, on my first holiday from work, we went swimming again, at an indoor pool. My son dived in as fearlessly as ever and sank like a stone. I rescued him and found that he was mainly startled and I was mainly disappointed—not at his forgetting how to swim, but at the loss of something we were proud of, something we enjoyed doing together.

I convinced myself for quite a while that we still had many hours in the day together, enough that I wouldn't miss any important steps in his development. But late one afternoon last week, we went to play at a neighbor's house. My son hopped on his playmate's tricycle, and I expected to see him scoot off in his normal manner—two feet at a time, feet on the ground rather than on the pedals, moving in fits and starts. But he set his feet on the pedals—clearly a practiced and mastered skill—and zoomed off. I knew that somehow I'd missed all the trial and error, the skips and skids, along the way to becoming an expert pedaler.

The Limits of Success

The point I never see in the success stories—but that my life as a mother with a career has convinced me is true—is that you really can't have it all. If you're going to do the things I think you have to do to be a mother, you can't go full speed over the course that my alumnae magazine lays out. It's not an all-or-nothing choice, but the compromises are real: I would never have been another Noam Chomsky, but I could have been more successful in the world of academic linguistics as a full-time, childless worker than I have a chance of being now, with one child already and another on the way.

Most of the women I know have arrangements for work and family different from the Successful Woman's full-time-job/full-time-help plan. Their lives reveal more obviously the choices they've made and the tolls taken on family or career. I have one friend who interrupted her career for eight years to raise children. It has required a long time and a lot of self-confidence to reach her current position. Another has held three jobs in the three years I've known her, because she resigns when a job presses her to the point where she feels she's sacrificing her children's well-being. Several friends work part-time, for different reasons. One wants to spend more free time with her children, because she feels she learns more about them on the way to the dentist or doing the grocery shopping than she does on special trips to the zoo or museums. Another wants to be at home to make up for the absence of a husband with an exceedingly heavy work schedule. Most of these women are very strict about their part-time hours and have very strictly part-time, limited-success jobs as a result. Many of my other friends don't work at all because they intended to raise families from the start, or feel the children need their mothers full-time, or have responsibilities within an extended family.

Most of these women are not as successful professionally as the women we meet in the articles. They are no less smart or talented or ambitious, but they have simply chosen to spend a greater portion of their energies and time on their private rather than professional lives.

I've tried the whole range of motherhood/career combinations in the last two and a half years: full-time work, part-time work, no work at all. This year, I do have very separate private and professional lives. When people ask me what I do, my answer is safe and fashionable: I tell them my job title (I am an assistant dean at Georgetown University) and add that my son keeps me busy in my time after work.

But I know how the world works, and I'm embarrassed that I already worry about what I'll answer next year, when the truth is that I'll be at home raising two children and otherwise unemployed. What do I say then? "I'm at home with the children," or "I'm a linguist but I'm taking time off to raise the children now," or "I don't work any more because we have two children"?

One of my friends is in this situation now; she warns me that any of these answers is a conversation killer. Of course we agree that we'd rather be out of a conversation with anyone who considered it killed at that point. Our real complaint is

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that in towns like Washington, unlike the small towns in which we grew up, there is narrow-mindedness, ignorance, condescension, and indifference about motherhood. The people we meet at parties don't know what it means to be a successful mother; but they know about the "achievements" a Successful Woman can list.

They don't know about people like my neighbor, a woman my own age with two children, who works as hard as any superachieving young lawyer or TV producer. Her son (about one year old) rises before 5:00 every morning, and her daughter (almost four) does not go to bed until 9:00. In between, they nap at different times, so that one of them is always up. She has no company-dictated coffee breaks or business lunches; nor does she have any outside measures of the quality and devotion of her work. Twenty years from now, her children may remember if she sews that Halloween costume or takes them sledding on the first snowy day, if she helps them put together puzzles instead of turning on the cartoons, if she tolerates "helping" hands when making the birthday cake and deals with the broken eggs and spilled milk later on. But these count for nothing in the measure of a modern woman's success.

Our Pageant of Progress

I used to think that child-rearing was as easy and uncomplicated as the success stories make it out to be. During my son's first year, he would nap in the day for five or six miraculous hours at a stretch. I would doggedly do my work at home while he slept, and I felt smug in my discovery of what I thought must be a truly well-kept secret: Children are easy; they sleep a lot and cry only a little. Men, I thought, were missing the boat. Better not to let them know.

I've become wiser, of course. Children are not easy. They quickly forsake naps and develop tempers. A stretch of free time now comes only in the dead of night, barring nightmares and sickness. Tending them requires vast reserves of patience, imagination, and humor.

I've found, as well, that the satisfactions and rewards of the endeavor are far greater than its aggravations. But there seems to be no way I can convince a non-parent about the love I feel for, and the joy I take from, the son who has in so many ways changed my life. Over the years we have measured the success of men so much in terms of their careers that we have left them almost no alternative to missing the boat—the important boat, the one that will not come back for them later. Now we are measuring the Successful Woman the same way, and with the same consequences. If the success of women is to be judged in terms of performance at work alone, then the contest we're all in becomes as trivial and silly as a beauty pageant—and the rewards as meaningless, elusive, and above all temporary. ■

The Washington Monthly

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Bottom-Line Fever at General Motors

by John Z. De Lorean with J. Patrick Wright

It isn't often that a captain of industry talks candidly about the corporate world. John DeLorean never quite made captain, but he spent a lot of time on the bridge. From 1964 to 1969, DeLorean ran General Motors' Pontiac division; from then until 1971, he ran Chevrolet. He spent two years at the next level up—a $650,000-a-year corporate vice presidency—before quitting in 1973.

After leaving General Motors, De Lorean collaborated with J. Patrick Wright, a reporter for Business Week, *on a book about his experiences. Wright wrote the book,* On A Clear Day You Can See General Motors, *in DeLorean's voice. They offered the book to Playboy Press, which planned to publish it in 1975. But by then DeLorean had decided to start a car company of his own, and he backed out of the book deal, fearing GM would find some way to retaliate against his fledgling company.*

The book drifted in limbo. Finally, Wright quit Business Week *to become his own publisher; operating out of his basement, he published a small run of the book in November. De Lorean says he knew nothing of this until the book hit the streets, and says he found the tone "harsher" than he remembered. But he is not unhappy with the book's release—or its impact: although GM apparently has not tried to undermine his new company, release of the book effectively forestalls any such attempt.*

DeLorean criticizes GM for selling unsafe cars, for steeping its executives in paperwork and petty politics, and for deceptive promotion. The subtleties of promotion have not been lost on De-Lorean, who shows himself in a shaft of light more pure than even the most conscientious executive is likely to merit. The book may not tell all—but it tells much more than an outsider could ordinarily hope to learn about one of our largest industrial enterprises.

This excerpt has been adapted from Chapter Four, "Why Moral Men Make Immoral Decisions."

—The Editors

"We feel that 1972 can be one of Chevrolet's great years. . . . Most of the improvements this year are engine and chassis components aimed at giving a customer a better car for the money. . . . I want to reiterate our pledge, the 1972 Chevrolets will be the best in history. . . ."

The words seemed to fall out of my mouth like stones from an open hand. Effortlessly. Almost meaninglessly. It was August 1971. I was powergliding through the National Press Preview of 1972 Chevrolet cars and trucks at Raleigh House, a mock-Tudor restaurant in suburban Detroit. The audience was filled with reporters from all over the country along with a plentiful sprinkling of Chevrolet managers. The presentation and question-answer session went smoothly. I was stepping down from the podium and receiving the usual handshakes and compliments when a strange feeling hit me:

"My God! I've been through all this before."

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Somehow I felt detached from it all, looking down on myself in the banquet hall surrounded by executives, newsmen and glittering Chevrolets and questioning why I was there and what I was doing. The answers were not satisfactory.

"This whole show is nothing but a replay of last year's show, and the year before that and the year before that," I thought. "The speech I just gave was the same speech I gave last year, written by the same guy in public relations about the same superficial product improvements. And the same questions were being asked by the same newsmen. Almost nothing has changed."

I looked around the room for a moment searching for anything that could show me that there was real meaning in the exercises we were going through, that the national press conference and the tens of similar dealer product announcements I conducted across the country were something more than just hypes. But I found nothing.

Instead, I got the empty feeling that what I was doing there might be nothing more than perpetuating a gigantic fraud. A fraud on the American consumer by promising him something new but giving him only surface alterations—"tortured sheet metal" as former chairman Frederic G. Donner used to say—or a couple of extra horsepower and an annual price increase. A fraud on the American economy, because I always had a vague suspicion that the annual model change might be good for the auto business in the short term but not good for the economy and the country.

And a fraud on our own company. When General Motors began to grow, on the principle of annual model changes and the promotion of something new and different, cars were almost all alike, with the same basic color—black. There was room for cosmetic changes as well as substantial advancement in technology with new and better engines, more sophisticated transmissions, improved performance and comfort characteristics. But by now there was nothing new and revolutionary in car development and there hadn't been for years. As a company, we were kidding ourselves that these slight annual alterations were innovative. They were not. We were living off the gullibility of the consumer combined with the fantastic growth of the American economy in the 1960s—salting away billions of dollars of profits in the process and telling ourselves we were great managers. This bubble was surely going to break, I thought. The consumer is going to get wise to us, and when he does we will have to fight for a long time to get back into his favor.

Those feelings during the preview led me to tell newsmen during lunch that I would probably leave the auto industry when I was age 55 or so, to get involved in helping find answers to America's problems. There was skepticism and disbelief in their voices as we talked.

The Fourteenth Floor, the executive stronghold of GM's world headquarters in midtown Detroit, went through the ceiling when the stories appeared the next day saying I was going to forsake GM in eight or nine years. It looked to them as if I was trying to force their hand by saying: "Make me president by then or I'll quit."

To anyone in the corporation who asked, I explained that my luncheon comments, though not irrevocable, were sincere and that I was having some internal conflicts about my job. My doubts about the worth of the annual model change were just a part of a growing concern I had about the general level of morality practiced in GM in particular and parts of American business in general.

It seemed to me then, and still does now, that the system of American business often produces wrong, immoral, and irresponsible decisions, even though the personal morality of the people running the businesses is often above reproach. The system has a different morality as a group than the people do as individuals, which permits it willfully to produce ineffective or dangerous products, deal dictatorially and often unfairly with suppliers, pay bribes for business, abrogate the rights of employees by demanding blind loyalty to management, or tamper with the democratic process of government through illegal political contributions.

I am not a psychologist, so I can't offer a professional opinion on what happens to the freedom of individual minds when they are blended into the group management thought-process of business. But my private analysis is this:

Morality has to do with people. If an action is viewed primarily from the perspective of its effect on people, it is put into the moral realm. Business in America, however, is impersonal. This is particularly true of large American multinational corporations. They are viewed by their em-

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ployees and publics as faceless. The ultimate measure of the success and failure of these businesses is not their effect on people, but their earnings per share of stock. The first question to greet any business proposal is, how will it affect profits? *People* do not enter the equation of a business decision except to the extent that their reaction will hurt or enhance earnings per share.

In such a completely impersonal context, business decisions of questionable personal morality are easily justified. A person who shoots and kills another is sentenced to life in prison. A businessman who makes a defective product which kills people may get a nominal fine or a slap on the hands, if he is ever brought to trial at all.

The impersonal process of business decision-making is reinforced by a sort of mob psychology that results from group management. Watergate certainly proved what can happen when blind devotion to a system or a process of thought moves unchecked. Members of the Nixon administration never raised any real questions about the morality of the break-in and cover-up. Their only concern was to save the system. So too in business. Too often the only questions asked are: What is the expedient thing to do? How can we increase profits per share?

Never once while I was in GM's management did I hear substantial concern raised about the impact of our business on America, its consumers, or the economy. When we should have been planning switches to smaller, more fuel-efficient, lighter cars in the late 1960s, in response to a growing demand in the marketplace, GM refused because "we make more money on big cars." It mattered not that customers wanted the smaller cars, or that a national balance-of-payments deficit was being built, in large part because of the burgeoning sales of foreign cars in the American market.

Refusal to enter the small car market when the profits were better on bigger cars, despite the needs of the public and the national economy, was not an isolated case of corporate insensitivity. It was typical. And what disturbed me is that it was indicative of fundamental problems with the system.

GM certainly was no more irresponsible than many American businesses. But the fact that the "prototype" of the well-run business engaged in questionable practices and delivered decisions which I felt were sometimes illegal, immoral, or irresponsible is an indictment of the American business system.

Earlier in my career, I accepted these decisions at GM without question. But as I was exposed to more facets of the business, I came to a realization of the responsibilities we had in managing a giant corporation and making a product which substantially affected people and national commerce. It bothered me how cavalierly these responsibilities were often regarded.

Unsafe at Any Profit

The Corvair case is a first-class example of a basically irresponsible and immoral business decision which was made by men of generally high personal moral standards.

The Corvair was unsafe as it was originally designed. It was conceived along the lines of the Porsche. These cars were powered by engines placed in the rear and supported by an independent, swing-axle suspension system. In the Corvair's case, the engine was all-aluminum and air-cooled (compared to the standard water-cooled iron engines). This, plus the rear placement of the engine, made the car new and somewhat different in the American market.

However, there are several bad engineering characteristics inherent in rear-engine cars which use a swing-axle suspension. In turns at high speeds they tend to become directionally unstable and therefore difficult to control. The rear of the car lifts or "jacks," and the rear wheels tend to tuck under the car, which encourages the car to flip over. In the high-performance Corvair, the car conveyed a false sense of control to the driver when in fact he might have been very close to losing control of the vehicle. The result could be fatal.

These problems with the Corvair were well documented inside GM's engineering staff long before the Corvair was offered for sale. Frank Winchell, now vice-president of engineering but then an engineer at Chevy, flipped one of the first prototypes on the GM test track in Milford, Michigan. Others had the same experience.

The questionable safety of the car caused a massive internal fight among GM's

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engineers over whether the car should be built with another form of suspension. On one side of the argument was Chevrolet's then general manager, Ed Cole, an engineer and product innovator. He and some of his engineering colleagues were enthralled with the idea of building the first modern, rear-engine American car. I am convinced they felt the safety risks of the swing-axle suspension were minimal. On the other side was a wide assortment of top-flight engineers, including Charles Chayne, then vice-president of engineering, Von D. Polhemus, engineer in charge of chassis development, and others.

These men collectively and individually made vigorous attempts inside GM to keep the Corvair, as designed, out of production or to change the suspension system to make the car safer. One top corporate engineer told me that he showed his test results to Cole but by then, he said, "Cole's mind was made up."

Albert Roller, who worked for me in Pontiac's advanced engineering section, tested the car and pleaded with me not to use it at Pontiac. Roller had been an engineer with Mercedes-Benz before joining GM, and he said that Mercedes had tested similarly designed rear-engine, swing-axle cars and had found them far too unsafe to build.

At the very least, then, within GM in the late 1950s, serious questions were raised about the Corvair's safety. At the very most, there was a mountain of documented evidence that the car should not be built as it was then designed.

But Cole, who later became GM's president, was a strong voice in company affairs. In addition, the car as he proposed it would cost less to build than the same car with a conventional rear suspension. Management not only went along with Cole, it also told the dissenters in effect to "stop these objections. Get on the team, or you can find someplace else to work." The ill-fated Corvair was launched in the fall of 1959.

The results were disastrous. I don't think any one car before or since produced as gruesome a record on the highway as the Corvair. It was designed and promoted to appeal to the spirit and flair of young people, and sold in part as a sports car. Young Corvair owners, therefore, were trying to bend their cars around curves at high speeds and were killing themselves in alarming numbers.

It was only a couple of years or so before GM's legal department was inundated with lawsuits over the car. And the fatal swath that this car cut through the automobile industry ironically touched the lives of many GM executives, employees, and dealers themselves.

The son of Cal Werner, general manager of the Cadillac Division, was killed in a Corvair. Werner was absolutely convinced that the design defect in the car was responsible. He said so many times. The son of Cy Osborne, an executive vice-president in the 1960s, was critically injured in a Corvair and suffered irreparable brain damage. Bunkie Knudsen's niece was brutally injured in a Corvair. And the son of an Indianapolis Chevrolet dealer also was killed in the car. Ernie Kovacs, my favorite comedian, was killed in a Corvair.

While the car was being developed at Chevrolet, we at Pontiac were spending $1.3 million on a project to adapt the Corvair to our division. The corporation had given us the go-ahead to work with the car to give it a Pontiac flavor. Our target for introduction was the fall of 1960, a year after Chevy introduced the car.

As we worked on the project, I became absolutely convinced by Chayne, Polhemus and Roller that the car was unsafe. So I conducted a three-month campaign, with Knudsen's support, to keep the car out of the Pontiac lineup. Fortunately, Buick and Oldsmobile at the time were tooling up their own compact cars, the Special and the F-85, which featured conventional front-engine designs.

We talked the corporation into letting Pontiac switch from a Corvair derivative to a version of the Buick-Oldsmobile car. We called it the Tempest and introduced it in the fall of 1960 with a four-cylinder engine as standard equipment and a V-8 engine as an option.

When Knudsen took over the reins of Chevrolet in 1961, he insisted that he be given corporate authorization to install a stabilizing bar in the rear to counteract the natural tendency of the Corvair to flip off the road. The cost of the change would be about $15 a car. But his request was refused by The Fourteenth Floor as "too expensive."

Bunkie was livid. As I understand it, he went to the Executive Committee and told the top officers of the corporation that if they didn't give him permission to make the Corvair safe, he was going to resign

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from GM. The fear of the bad publicity that surely would result from Knudsen's resignation forced management's hand. They relented, and Bunkie put the stabilizing bar on the Corvair in the 1964 models. The next year a completely new and safer independent suspension designed by Frank Winchell was put on the Corvair. It became one of the safest cars on the road.

But the damage done to the car's reputation by then was irreparable. Corvair sales began to decline precipitously after the waves of unfavorable publicity following Ralph Nader's book and the many lawsuits being filed across the country. Production of the Corvair was halted in 1969, four years after it was made a safe and viable car.

There wasn't a man in top GM management who had anything to do with the Corvair who would purposely build a car that he knew would hurt or kill people. But, as part of a management team pushing for increased sales and profits, each gave his approval to decisions which produced the car in the face of the serious doubts that were raised about its safety.

The corporation became almost paranoid about the leaking of inside information on the car. In April 1971, 19 boxes of microfilmed Corvair owner complaints, which had been ordered destroyed by upper management, turned up in the possession of two suburban Detroit junk dealers. When The Fourteenth Floor found this out, it went into panic. We at Chevrolet were ordered to buy the microfilm back and have it destroyed.

I refused, saying that a public company had no right to destroy documents of its business and that GM's furtive purchase would surely surface. Besides, the $20,000 asking price was outright blackmail.

When some consumer groups showed an interest in getting the film, the customer relations department was ordered to buy the film, which it did. To prevent similar slip-ups in the future, the corporation tightened its scrapping procedures.

Poor Recall

Chevrolet products were involved in the largest product recall in automotive history when, in 1971, the corporation called back 6.7 million 1965-69 cars to repair defective motor mounts. The rubber mounts, which anchor the engine to the car, were breaking apart and causing the engine to lunge out of place; this often locked the accelerator open at about 25 miles per hour. Cars were smashing up all across the country when panicky drivers couldn't stop them or jumped out in fright.

The defect need never have been. At Pontiac, when I was chief engineer, we developed a safety-interlock motor mount which we put on our 1965 car line. It was developed because we discovered that the mounts we were using were defective. We made our findings and the design of the new motor mount available to the rest of the car divisions. None of them opted to use it.

However, reports started drifting in from the field in 1966 that the Chevrolet mounts were breaking apart after extensive use. Chevrolet did nothing. Dealers replaced the mounts—and charged the customers for parts and labor.

When I got to Chevrolet in 1969, the reports about motor mount failures were reaching crisis proportions. When a motor mount failure was blamed for a fatal accident involving an elderly woman in Florida, I asked Roger Kyes, my boss, to let me quietly recall the cars with these problems and repair them at GM's expense. He refused, on the grounds that it would cost too much. By 1971, however, the trouble was becoming widely known outside of the corporation because owners were complaining to local newspapers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and several consumer groups.

The pressure began to build on General Motors to recall the cars. GM started to repair these cars at company expense, but it refused to recall them, preferring to wait until the mounts broke in use before doing anything. Bob Irvin, of the Detroit *News*, who was receiving huge numbers of complaints, wrote stories almost daily about GM's steadfast refusal to recall all the cars.

The fires of discontent were further fanned when Ed Cole, who was opposing the recall internally, was asked by a reporter why GM continued to refuse to recall the cars. He replied that anyone who "can't manage a car at 25 miles per hour shouldn't be driving." It was an unfortunately callous remark, for which I am sure Cole was later sorry. But he became more rigid in his stance against a recall campaign. So I wrote a memo to my immediate

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boss, Tom Murphy, which said in part:

"At this point in time, it seems to me that we have no alternative (but to recall the Chevrolets). Certainly if GM can spend over $200 million a year in advertising, the $30 or $40 million this would cost is not a valid reason for delaying. Certainly, it would be worth the cost to stop the negative publicity, even if management cannot agree to recall these cars on moral grounds."

Murphy received the memo and returned it to me, refusing to accept it.

Finally, about a month or so later, under the weight of government, consumer group and newspaper pressure, GM recalled the 6.7 million cars with defective engine mounts. The price was about $40 million to recall the cars and wire the engines to the car so they wouldn't slip out of place when the mounts broke.

But the cost was much greater in the incredibly bad publicity GM received because of its own unwillingness to admit its responsibility for the defect and to repair the cars on its own. It was a case of the corporation taking an attitude of "the owners be damned." The motor mount affair reflected GM's corporate attitude toward the consumer movement, an attitude shared in a variety of ways in a wide variety of industries.

Vote for 'Cash'

GM's consumer image also suffered from a dearth of product innovations. This produced an unquenchable thirst at GM for information on what the competition was doing. This led the company into areas which I felt were of questionable legality.

If Only Government Were Run Like a Business...

It wasn't all deceptive marketing and moral anguish at GM, according to John DeLorean. Sometimes, it was good clean bureaucratic fun. Here's a scene from The Fourteenth Floor, GM's executive stronghold:

The most embarrassing meeting I attended "upstairs" involved a presentation to the Industrial Relations Policy Group in the fall of 1972. A young guy from the labor relations staff was talking about an obscure personnel point which he proposed that we change. It was an insignificant matter by any corporate standard, having to do with increasing a transferred employee's pay to compensate for the cost of living. He simply meant that what may be a great salary in Selma, Alabama, isn't worth much in New York City. So what were we doing in a big meeting of top brass listening to this presentation? I couldn't answer that question.

Looking around I counted up about $10 million worth of executive talent listening to and watching this presentation of cost-of-living graphs, color slides, industry analysis charts and company-by-company comparisons. The presentation finally ended. A couple of guys who were dozing in their seats blinked awake, and the room of executives looked toward the chairman for an indication of what we were going to do. The chairman was Richard C. Gerstenberg, a fairly trim, hard-working finance man, who normally presented a friendly, folksy manner common among GM executives. Gerstenberg snapped, "Goddamnit! I don't like to be surprised."

We were all stunned because the point of the meeting was so insignificant anyway. "What is Gerstenberg so surprised about?" I thought.

"We can't make a decision on this now," he continued. "I think we ought to form a task force to look into this and come back with a report in 90 to 120 days. Then we can make a decision."

He then rattled off the names of the members of the task force he was appointing. There was an eerie silence after the chairman spoke. It lasted for what seemed like half a day.

Finally, vice-president Harold G. Warner broke the silence. "Dick, this presentation is the result of the task force you appointed some time ago. The people you appointed to the new task force are on the old one..."

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So concerned was management with the plans of the competition, especially Ford, that the final okay on product programs was often delayed until we received the latest intelligence report on Ford's product programs.

I was told by Lou Bauer, once Chevrolet's comptroller, that when Bunkie Knudsen took over Chevrolet in 1961, he was shocked to find on the payroll two men who worked for Ford. They worked in Ford's product planning area and passed on new product information to Chevrolet. Knudsen, I was told, fired the spies the day he confirmed their existence. But GM continued to keep Ford under close—and questionable—surveillance.

This habit reached a height of sorts when several of us walked into a meeting of the Administration Committee sometime after 1971, and found the top corporate officers poring over a very confidential "spread sheet." This report gave the definitive breakdown, product-by-product, of what it cost Ford to build and sell its cars. It was the kind of information which, for our products, never got off The Fourteenth Floor. GM top management wouldn't even let its own divisional management in on all the corporate costs. But somehow top management had gotten this information about Ford, and they were studying it with deep concentration. Corporate counsel Ross Malone was incensed. He snapped, "Goddamnit! You guys shouldn't be doing this."

His voice was angry and pleading. It was obvious to me that Malone thought what was taking place had serious legal overtones.

After he spoke, someone scooped up the Ford cost report and hustled it off to one of the front offices. None of us at the divisional level ever heard about the report again. Now, I am sure that the men studying these confidential cost sheets and giving their approval to a system which procured them would be outraged at the suggestion of similar conduct in their personal lives. Like most Americans, they were probably angered by the disclosures in the wake of Watergate that the CIA, U.S. Army, FBI, and other government agencies spied on unsuspecting citizens. And yet, at GM, they were justifying the very same sort of conduct on the grounds that "this is business."

GM also took its place in the line with scores of other American businesses in promoting what I think are, at the very least, improper political campaign contributions from its top executives. The system was complicated and far more secretive than the outright corporate political gifts for which a number of major corporations have paid fines.

The contributions program was operated, as I understood it, by the financial side of the business with assistance from some people on the public relations staff. The finance staff apparently collected the money and a few PR people distributed it with guidance from The Fourteenth Floor.

There were two tiers to the system. Middle level managers were generally allowed to contribute a sum of money to the party of their choice. However, once an executive reached upper management levels, it was decided for him how much he would contribute and to whom it would go.

When I was a general manager, the divisional controller once walked into my office with a sheet of paper that apparently had been given to him by the corporate finance staff. On the sheet was written my name and the amount I was to donate to that year's election campaigns—national, state, or local. I was told to make a check out to "cash" for the amount assigned to me and give it to the controller. Once the check was made out, an executive did not know to whom or for whom the political contribution was made, nor the manner in which it was made: whether it was an anonymous cash contribution, one that was made in his name or a corporate gift. All the executive knew was that he wrote a check to "cash" for the predetermined amount.

The sums were big. For a GM vice president, it might be as much as $3,000 in a presidential campaign, less for an off-year congressional election, and so on down to a few hundred dollars for a city election.

I participated in the system several times at Pontiac. I cannot recall whether I made the donations myself or wrote a check to "cash." But finally, I just couldn't accept the practice, and I refused to participate. The thing seemed wholly improper. My franchise to vote and donate as I saw fit was too important to me as a citizen to delegate it to management or some guy on one of the corporate staffs. The corporation has no right to tell any executive how to vote, or to know how he votes.

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After I refused to participate in the contribution program at GM on several different occasions, top management hit the roof. As in the past, the chore of trying to bring me into line fell to Kyes. He was ready for battle.

"John, you'd better damn well play this game," he said. "If you don't, you are telling us you aren't on the team. We don't think highly of guys who aren't on the team at GM."

Then he sought to reduce the doubts in my mind to money, the common rationalization in business.

"We take care of you at bonus time. When you make this contribution, you get it back as part of your bonus. And if you don't make the contribution, then you aren't going to get that much bonus."

The meeting ended angrily, as usual, with neither of us giving an inch. I continued to boycott the political contribution system at GM, and instead made personal donations to candidates I thought were worthy. And I must admit I never noticed an inexplicable drop in the bonus I received for my work at GM thereafter.

The Big Greenback Team

While these business practices involved questionable ethics exercised for the good of the business, sometimes upper management executives used their positions of power and knowledge to profit *personally* in corporate business. These were by no means widespread and perhaps confined to a few individuals.

When I was directing Pontiac, several GM dealers were purchasing the troubled National Car Rental Company for almost nothing—less than $4 million. The price, as I remember, was two or three dollars per share.

While they were doing this, they also worked a deal with upper corporate management for GM to provide $22 million in advertising assistance, because National was going to emphasize GM cars in its business and promotion. The confirmation of this arrangement was known only to a few people. But once it became public the stock of the company would surely jump in value. One day one of the participants in the purchase of National came to me and said, "You've got to get some of this stock." I said, "That's an obvious conflict of interest. I can't do it."

He said, "Hell, I'll buy it for you and keep it in my name. Tell me how much you want." I refused his second offer because it was wrong, and what's more, once you let a guy do something like that, he owns you forever. You're his puppet. He was irritated by my refusal and said, "Hell, we're doing it for ——" and he named a high-ranking GM official. It was quite a surprise.

I never personally verified whether the guy this dealer named was in on the deal or not, which is why I am not disclosing the names involved. But I do know that the word was rife through the corporation that officers were making bundles from insider information on National stock. So widespread was this rumor that management conducted an investigation and demanded to examine National's stockholder list to see if any GM executives were on it. There were none. But then there wouldn't be—if the stock were held in someone else's name.

On another occasion when I was at Chevrolet, word got around that company and divisional executives were speculating on land around the Lordstown assembly plant in Ohio. Since these people were privy to our plans for the Lordstown area, they could buy the land and sell when its value rose.

Again the corporation conducted an investigation and apparently fingered several people, including one of our Chevy managers. Word was that the culprits would be fired. One day, the Chevy executive in question walked into my office obviously nervous and excited, and snapped: "If you guys make something out of this, I'm going to blow the lid off this goddamn thing."

"What the hell do you mean?" I asked.

He replied by telling me the name of a real estate man in the Lordstown area who he said was acting as the agent in these land transactions, and who was willing to implicate top corporate managers. Some of the executives were the same ones trying to have him fired in the brewing scandal. I told the guy I knew nothing about the matter and was not part of the firing action. But he must have put the same threat to his prosecutors in the corporation—because it wasn't too long before this executive who was on the verge of being fired was plucked from Chevy management, promoted to a corporate job, and given a $5,000 raise. ■

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Who's Who in the Carter Administration

One way to tell who the top players are in the White House is to look at the list of those who have been consistently in on the handling of the Iran crisis. They are **Zbigniew Brzezinski, Hamilton Jordan, Jody Powell,** and **Lloyd Cutler.** Of the "three wise men" brought in last summer—Cutler, **Alonzo McDonald,** and **Hedley Donovan**—only Cutler has made the first team... **Rosalynn Carter** may not go down in history as another Eleanor Roosevelt, but she does seem to share Mrs. Roosevelt's susceptibility to being conned by the promoters of dubious humanitarian schemes. First, there were her efforts to obtain millions in federal funds to help Atlanta activist Bill Milliken's "Cities in Schools" program (see our June 1978 issue) despite widespread doubts about its value. Now she has let herself be associated with something called the "International Children's Appeal," whose founder, one John Ellsworth, is a felon with organized crime connections who admits to having "blown $2.8 million" of the organization's funds on his personal expenses....

In

WHITE HOUSE

Chairman, President's Special Commission on Immigration—**Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh** is president of Notre Dame University.

Coordinator for Refugee Affairs—**Victor Palmieri,** a Los Angeles lawyer/businessman, succeeds former Senator Dick Clark.

Deputy Appointments Secretary—**Bob Dunn** has been an aide to Patrick J. Lucey, former ambassador to Mexico.

COMMERCE

Secretary—**Philip M. Klutznick** was founder of the Chicago-based Urban Investment and Development Corp., a partner in the New York investment firm of Solomon Brothers, chairman of the Continental Foreign Trade Bank, and has been U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

Deputy Secretary—**Luther H. Hodges** has been an undersecretary.

ENERGY

Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy—**George W. Cunningham** has been deputy chief of the U.S. mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Commissioner, Social Security Administration—**William J. Driver** was head of the Veterans Administration under President Johnson. Until last year he was head of the Manufacturing Chemists Association.

HUD

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs—**Gene Russell** has been the press officer for the U.S. Conference of Mayors since 1972.

JUSTICE

Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division—**Alice Daniel** has been interim director of the Legal Services Corp. of Washington, D.C.

Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Division—**Sanford M. Litvack** is a partner in the New York law firm of Donovan, Leisure, Newton and Irvine.

Public Information Director—**Robert M. Smith** is a San Francisco lawyer and has been special assistant to the Attorney General and head of the Office of Public Information.

Executive Assistant Attorney General—**Ann Fleisher Hoffman** has been associate general counsel of the International Lady's Garment Workers Union in New York City.

Special Assistant for Litigation—**Edward R. Slaughter, Jr.** has been a member of the

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Charlottesville law firm of McGuire, Woods & Battle.

Deputy Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration—**Frederick A. Rody, Jr.** has been regional director of the Drug Enforcement Administration in Miami.

LABOR

Executive Director, Occupational Safety and Health Administration—**Harriet Miller** has worked in several posts for the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Retired Teachers Association.

STATE

Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs—**Dean R. Hinton,** a career foreign service officer, has been ambassador to the European Community since 1975.

Deputy U.S. Representative to the U.N. Security Council—**Richard Wilson Petree** has been the alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the U.N.

Ambassador to Swaziland—**Richard Cavins Matheron.**

Ambassador to Morocco—**Angier Biddle Duke.**

Ambassador to Sri Lanka—**Donald R. Toussaint.**

Assistant Administrator, Agency for International Development—**Genta A. Hawkins** has been the legislative management officer for foreign aid in the State Department office of congressional relations.

TRANSPORTATION

Assistant Secretary for Policy—**William Johnston** has been associate director of the White House Domestic Policy Staff.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Environmental Protection Agency
General Counsel—**Michele Corasch** has been assistant general counsel at the Energy Department.

Federal Communications Commission
Director, Press/News Division—**Edward W. Dooley** has been press spokesman for the President's Council on Wage and Price Stability.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Associate Directors—**William H. Wilcox** has been administrator of the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration; **Frank A. Camm** has been deputy CIA director.

General Services Administration
Assistant Administrator for External Affairs—**Paul W. Newton** has been congressional liaison for the Office of Personnel Management.

Merit Systems Protection Board
Director of Administration—**Jay W. Morava** has been deputy director of administrative programs and services at the Labor Department.

National Labor Relations Board
General Counsel—**William A. Lubbers** has worked for the NLRB for 27 years, most recently as the executive secretary.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Director, Research Office—**Robert J. Budnitz,** a former head of the energy and environmental division of the Lawrence Laboratory at the University of California, has been Deputy Director of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.

Veterans Administration
Chief Medical Director—**Donald L. Custis** is a former surgeon general of the Navy.

Out

Health and Human Resources
Assistant Secretary for Education—**Mary Frances Berry** has resigned.

Commissioner, Social Security Commission—**Stanford G. Ross** is joining the law firm of Califano, Ross, and Heineman.

Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation—**Benjamin W. Heineman Jr.** also will join Califano, Ross, and Heineman.

Treasury
Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service—**Stuart Seigel** has resigned.

Interior
Solicitor—**Leo M. Krulitz** will resign next month to become general counsel of the Cummins Engine Co. in Columbus, Indiana.

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Memo of the Month

Internal Revenue Service
memorandum

date: MAR 15 1979

to: ~~All Group Managers~~ Agents

from: Chief, Examination Branch CP:OIO:65

subject: Information Requests

Recently an employee received and apparently answered a telephonic request for information.

Calls from taxpayers for Information Requests should be referred to the Freedom of Information Reading Room at National Office.

Please bring this to the attention of all your employees.

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At the post office, the last shall go out first, and the meek shall inherit the bill

Double Standards for Second-Class Citizens

by Walter Jacob

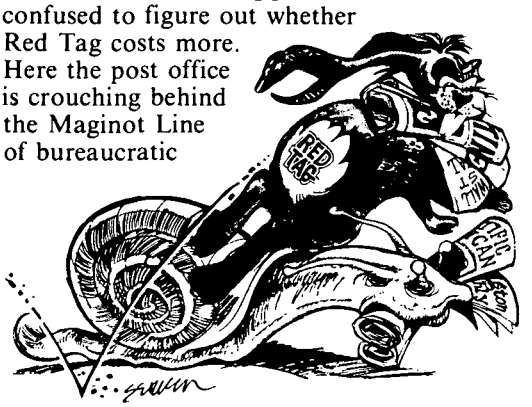
"How do they get me my Wall Street Journal so fast?" That kind of hazy enigma troubles you, no doubt, if you belong to the propertied class. The postman brings the *Journal* crisp and fresh the day it is published—in the same jumble of mail with the checks too old to cash and the survey asking if you favor the annexation of Texas. Have you ever had a letter delivered the same day you mailed it? If not, the thought may occur to you that the *Journal* is getting some sort of special treatment from the United States Postal Service.

Quite right. In fact, the postal service has special affection for several publications which it delivers with heel-clicking efficiency—among them *Time, Newsweek, Barrons, Fortune, Forbes,* and *Sports Illustrated.* These publications are the beneficiaries of a privileged class of mail service called Red Tag.

Red Tag is a special category of second-class mail that moves a magazine from New York to California in three days or less (often faster than first class), without the normal second-class ten-day lag. *The Wall Street Journal* takes this service and gives it an added boost by printing simultaneously in several plants around the country—using satellite transmission of facsimile copy—and trucking the finished papers early each weekday morning to designated post offices. The paper is in the postmen's hands almost before the ink is dry, and subscribers all across the country read stories within hours after they are written.

Damn straight of the *Journal*, you may think, to spend all that extra effort and postage money to bring readers the bad news about the market before their brokers make a margin call. Save your sympathy for the whales. The *Journal* pours money into its transmission equipment and printing plants and trucks, but it doesn't spend an extra cent on Red Tag service. Publications permitted to use Red Tag pay exactly the same rates as publications denied it. And prestige has nothing to do with it; *Scientific American* and *Architectural Digest* cannot get Red Tag efficiency even though they pay the same rates. In fact, they couldn't get the service even if they offered to pay more; the postal service wouldn't take their money.

USPS offers this thoughtful extra to a favored few without extra charge because, it claims, its accounting procedures are too confused to figure out whether Red Tag costs more. Here the post office is crouching behind the Maginot Line of bureaucratic



Walter Jacob recently completed an editorial internship at The Washington Monthly

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defenses—since we can't figure it out, what's the point of talking about it. USPS nevertheless has been forced to talk about it—although it's only talking to itself. A suit before its quasi-independent pricing office, the Postal Rate Commission, demands that Red Tag users either be charged a premium or the service be opened to all comers. Magazines and similar mail using second class pay $580 million a year for postage, according to the Magazine Publishers Association. Of that, a Postal Rate Commission lawyer argues, $96 million is a subsidy for Red Tag.

As postal efficiency declines, and costs keep rising, every interest group worth its Pitney-Bowes has tried to pull its own little exemption out of the hat. The Red Tag subsidy may be the least convincing stunt, but it is certainly not the only presto-chango. The coveted non-profit mailing rate, for example, has been doled out to almost every organization with political clout *(see box)*. Congress, having already seen to its own needs by awarding itself the franking privilege, saw to the needs of its lineage recently by extending the "non-profit" rate to political parties.

Philanthropy at the First-Class Window: How Your Stamps Help Buy Jacques Cousteau an Asparagus Fork

Red Tag mailers aren't the only ones cashing in on the U.S. Postal Service. Non-profit organizations of any stripe can mail almost free. And in 1978 Congress extended the non-profit rates to political parties. Every time you buy a roll of stamps at the full rate (imagine the chuckles if you asked for a discount) you're subsidizing everyone from *Ms.* magazine to the local city councilman. You may think of yourself as a first-class citizen, but if you're paying full rate it means you're not a third-class lobbyist.

Non-profit rates are prized because they make it possible to use third-class mail for 3.1 cents a letter instead of 8.4 cents. This bargain rate was created in the 1950s to help charities and similar ventures; recently it has been extended to just about anybody equipped with a proclamation of lofty purpose.

The rates were supposed to apply to eight types of organizations—philanthropic, religious, educational, scientific, agricultural, labor, veterans', and fraternal. Political and lobbying organizations were specifically excluded. But then, in 1975, the National Rifle Association sued to get non-profit rates. NRA called its magazine "educational." The courts denied its claim, but language in subsequent rulings suggested that nearly anybody *except* NRA could qualify.

Soon almost every liberal lobbying outfit from Common Cause to the Gray Panthers had a non-profit permit. USPS began to treat the discount as an inalienable right for just about any group that didn't have stockholders, even though close inspection of some "non-profit" groups suggests that they exist primarily to raise funds for their officers' salaries. Others are directly and obviously political like the Committee on Political Education (COPE), the AFL-CIO lobbying arm, which used its non-profit privilege to mail pamphlets stumping for Jimmy Carter in 1976. So many groups are grabbing this handout that by 1978 the subsidy for third-class non-profit mailings had risen to $386.7 million a year.

Although most magazines still wallow in the swamp of second-class, some have escaped to the high ground of non-profithood. *National Geographic* is mailed cheap because it is published by the National Geographic Society, a struggling non-profit organization that owns a handsome building a few blocks from the White House, pays its tweedy directors generous fees to look at pictures, and maintains a private dining room fitted out with the proper asparagus forks. *Mother Jones*, a manicured fist of leftish politics, goes cheap because it is published by the Foundation for National Progress. *Smithsonian*, the glossy monthly published by the Smithsonian Institu-

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But the Red Tag story tops them all because it involves some of the staunchest critics of the federal dole—like *The Wall Street Journal*—and demonstrates the creative vigor with which a handout can be defended long after its purpose has faded into the mist of contradiction.

The Red Tag of Courage

Unlike the more recent handouts, Red Tag began in the 1920s. Magazines and newspapers were eligible if they were of "general interest" — covering the news of the day from a general perspective—and if they published at least weekly. The logic seemed reasonable: dailies and weeklies cover breaking news, so it's important to get them out pronto.

Red Tag fit right into the philosophical tradition of second-class mail, which is the class of periodicals. Until recently, all second class—whether Red Tag or standard—operated at a subsidy from first class. Buyers of stamps paid to subsidize the mailing of everything from *U.S. News*

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tion goes cheap because its parent is a congressionally-created "independent trust establishment" devoted to "the increase and diffusion of knowledge." Never mind that more than a third of its pages every month diffuse knowledge about Remy Martin, Cadillac, the Franklin Mint, and the rest of the advertisers.

Ms. magazine recently topped them all by winning non-profit status merely because it was not making money: there was no pretense of "educational" or "agricultural" service. This is an important innovation. At the beginning of these giveaways there was a distinction between "non-profit" (which meant filling a charitable need) and "unprofitable" (which meant nobody wants it). No more. Just because *Ms.* is non-profit doesn't mean it won't still try to make money. *Ms.* Publisher Patricia Carbine told the trade magazine *Folio* that her stockholders will still get payments "assuming the magazine can produce earnings." Non-profit earnings? With the *Ms.* postal bill cut by 50 per cent, maybe it's possible. Carbine said Warner Communications, the largest stockholder, "obviously agreed the future of *Ms.* would be enhanced by its changed status."

Congress, having passed out these non-profit bargains to everyone but the public, took the next logical step in 1978. It made sure its own needs were seen to, as well, by extending non-profit postage rates to political parties.

This gift was supposed to benefit only the givers, the Democratic and Republican parties, by means of abstruse language excluding everyone else. But the statutory jargon was so poorly worded and open-ended that USPS ordered permits granted to "anybody who walks in with a set of bylaws and says he likes politics," in the words of a high USPS official. Soon even the Libertarians, those doughty foes of government giveaways, were proudly using their cut-rate permits. Congress estimated that the subsidy for political parties would not exceed $2.5 million a year; James Finch, an assistant postmaster general, now says it will run to at least $24 million a year.

Congress has handicapped the program by appropriating only $4 million to cover its costs. When that money runs out, Finch says, USPS will revert to charging political parties the standard third-class rate. Congress will try to stretch those dollars by rewriting the statute so it only applies to the preferred two parties. If such a rollback survives the inevitable lawsuits that will follow, Democrats and Republicans will have confined the giveaway to themselves as initially planned.

Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee recently took advantage of the remaining subsidy to send out, at the 3.1 cent rate, a letter using simulated White House stationery and a mechanical Jimmy Carter signature. For just $5,000, the letter says, any American can become a member of something called the National Finance Council. Why the mailings of such an organization should be subsidized by the rest of us is unclear. You may want to write for clarification—but it will cost you 15 cents for the stamp.

—*W.J.*

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and World Report to *Silurian Fossil Quarterly*. The ordinary stamp-buyers sometimes asked the obvious—why not make second-class periodicals pull their own weight? If their readers want information, why shouldn't they bear its costs? Deep thinkers explained with haughty condescension that the proliferation of reading matter was of benefit to non-readers. The nucleus of enlightened periodical readers would radiate their insights far afield, into schools and institutions and bus stops, until, as though by osmosis, people everywhere were uplifted.

This line has some appeal, and was accepted by otherwise reasonable people for decades—conveniently overlooking the fact that the subsidy was regressive in the extreme. Readers of news periodicals were comparatively affluent. They could afford the extra few bucks non-subsidized magazines would cost. Non-readers were often poor. The last thing they needed was to pay more for postage stamps so money could be siphoned off to support the reading habits of their betters.

What's Behind P.O. Box #3?

In 1975, the postal service finally increased second class rates to wipe out the subsidies. Affluent publishers and academics responded with a righteous fury they seldom train on social problems affecting poorer non-subscribers. Time, Inc., ever the champion of the basement press, rumbled that "small publications will die by the hundreds." It opined that even its own stable of magazines might be thinned, and warned that *Time's* editorial quality might suffer. Leaving aside the vexing question of how to detect a decline in *Time's* editorial quality, one can assume the dire forecasts never came true. Second-class mailing costs have tripled since 1975, to about 12 cents per issue. For a weekly, the postage increase works out to about $4 per subscriber year—certainly significant, but not the death knell of free speech that *Time* predicted. Second-class rate increases are a main reason the post office reported a surplus last year for the first time in 34 years.

Within second class, however, the special Red Tag service continued. It is essentially USPS's admission that there has to be an alternative to its own inefficiency. The "time value" publications for which Red Tag was created surely need it. Dailies like *The Wall Street Journal* are valuable only in the hours after they come off the presses. Weeklies are most useful when topical, too. Why isn't this true of biweeklies? Well, sometimes it is. *Fortune* and *Forbes* get Red Tag service "in direct violation of the postal service's own rules," according to a Postal Rate Commission official. He says *Fortune* used "heavy clout" to snare the benefit; the USPS was embarrassed into extending it to *Fortune's* biweekly competitor, *Forbes*. But it may be that these two magazines just confounded strict-constructionist bureaucrats with their masthead use of "fortnightly." When I asked a USPS official how these two biweeklies could get a service that is specifically banned for biweeklies, he replied, "They're not biweeklies. They're fortnightlies."

If prompt delivery is important to dailies, weeklies and fortnightlies, why isn't it important to monthlies and fortmonthlies and what all? USPS maintains that such periodicals contain little "time value" information. USPS is right, of course, precisely because monthlies take so long to deliver: they can't possibly have topical content if they have to sit on a postal loading dock for a week. But there is no reason why a publisher might not want to bring his readers up-to-date information once a month, as weeklies do once a week, and newspapers do once a day.

The actual mechanisms of Red Tag are conveniently mysterious. What makes it so much faster? Red Tag users carefully sort their issues by zip code and deliver them to post offices according to rigid schedules. But *all* users of second class must pre-sort and deliver. Once *The Wall Street Journal* arrives at the post office, nothing much different happens to it than to any other piece of mail. The only difference is that Red Tag mail gets shipped out as it comes in; the rest of the stuff they let sit for a week. It's like slipping a ten to the head-waiter. He otherwise couldn't care less who gets the table with the stunning skyline view, and who sits by the salad bar. Except if you're in the Red Tag club, you don't have to spend the ten.

If you're as lost by now as the postal service hoped you would be, let's boil it all down to three possibilities: Red Tag costs less than regular second-class service, costs

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the same, or costs more.

Possibility #1: Red Tag costs less. Let's move on to the next possibility.

Possibility #2: Red Tag costs the same. Or, "Somebody has to get the best table." USPS says it can't be sure, but it *suspects* this is true. This is also the position taken by the Magazine Publishers Association. John Buzio, its counsel, says that "nobody has ever been able to prove Red Tag costs more." In business, doesn't providing special attention always cost more? "Intuition may suggest that it does, but intuition isn't enough. My guess," he says, applying intuition, "is that it costs at most slightly more."

For the sake of argument, you must assume there is simply a backlog of ten days' worth of mail clogging the system. Suppose it were wiped out by a managerial blitz. Then all the periodicals could be sent out as they came in. What would hold them up? Certainly not cost.

This obvious conclusion—if Red Tag costs no more, everybody should get it—causes postal officials to blanch. Not necessary, they say. It is, of course, USPS's attitude that *most* speedy delivery is not necessary. Does your grandmother really *need* to get a get-well card two days after she enters the hospital for surgery? Of course not. She'll still be there a week later.

Possibility #3: Red Tag costs more. This is the position of intuition. It's shared by a roster of monthly magazines which have sued over Red Tag, magazines ranging in philosophy and circulation from the one-man *Maine Antiques Digest* to this magazine and on up. Even *Time*, the staunchest defender of mail perqs, accepts the argument.

Time maintains its reverence for the well-aimed subsidy, however. Red Tag service, it says, "is essentially a public service for the benefit of recipients of mail. Continuation of such a service. . . without additional charge, is wholly warranted."

Time readers benefit, yes, by being able to pass some postage costs along to those who don't read *Time*. But we've been here before: it's the readers-are-more-equal position advocated wherever the elite meet. It's just been refined to apply only to those who read breaking news.

Faced with such arguments, USPS always wants to add a fourth possibility, the Maginot Line theory mentioned before—it's too confusing to think about. This is a promising line of argument for escaping complex policy problems, but not sufficient to qualify as a possibility.

Those publishers who are suing the USPS contend that Red Tag should either be extended to all second-class mail, or sold at a premium which reflects its true costs. This would mean restructuring rates only within second class, not raising rates as a whole. Monthlies and everybody else would have the choice of opting into Red Tag at a higher price, or staying with their current service at a discount. Publications now receiving Red Tag, but not really needing it, could drop out, and save themselves some money. Maynard Dixon, a Postal Rate Commission attorney, estimates that selling Red Tag at its true cost would add two cents to the mailing cost of a periodical. That means the subscription price of a weekly would rise about a dollar. Subscriptions for *The Wall Street Journal* would rise about $6. That's hardly more than the double shot of Chivas that *Journal* readers need after checking its market closings.

Surcharge It

Red Tag continues to operate under an incoherent syllogism anyone but a defense lawyer addressing a jury would be ashamed to recite. That is: Red Tag costs nothing more; Red Tag can't be extended because it costs too much; it doesn't matter what Red Tag costs because it's a valuable public service. The only sensible solution is to impose a surcharge that reflects the real cost and open the class to any customers. That way, two basic principles are served: users have to pay for what they get, and anybody can swagger into a post office and say, "Gimme the best you got." Both principles were once bulwarks of commerce—but never, unfortunately, of the postal service.

So as postal service becomes more expensive, customers with clout are forced to devote more and more of their efforts to carving out their own little special breaks. That makes postal service even more expensive for those who pay for the breaks, forcing them to plead for their own exemptions. . . and so on until the only customers left saddled with the costs of these accumulated privileges are the disorganized people in that long, slow-moving line by the "first class" window. ■

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Harvard's Soft Core

by Peter Engel

To Susan Wakefield, it did indeed appear to be a revolution in education. Wakefield is assistant to the dean of liberal education at the University of Utah, but like any other casual breakfast table newspaper reader, she first learned about Harvard's new "Core Curriculum" from the headlines and editorials—"a radical departure from established methods of undergraduate education" (*The New York Times*); "Not since 1945 had the academic world dared to devise a new formula for developing 'the educated man'" (*The Washington Post*); "A quiet revolution" (*The Saturday Review*). Even *The New York Daily News* was praising Harvard's plan as a "refreshing contrast to the sophomoric whims and caprices that marked the do-your-own-thing revolt on campuses in the 60s."

It was hard not to get excited about what appeared to be happening at Harvard. Two decades of "innovation" seemed to have left in doubt the ability of many of the nation's best universities—Harvard included—to supply their students with the basic skills that were traditionally thought to come with a "liberal education." Increasingly, our colleges seemed to be turning out smug monomorphs, from the ethereal women who took only music and art courses, to the determined "pre-med" and "pre-law" students who marched stiffly into their professions without so much as a sideways glance. It didn't help when the news came out that Harvard was giving academic credit to 22 students for a course on "the multiflex offense," taught by the quarterback of the football team. If that was what America's "best and brightest" were learning, what about the rest?

So it was refreshing, a year and a half ago, when Harvard Faculty Dean Henry Rosovsky announced a plan to overhaul the school's curriculum and "provide a solid and shared base of general and liberal education for all of our students." This new "Core Curriculum," it was said, would provide a "common ground of discourse," a "shared experience" to all Harvard undergrads before they squirreled themselves away in their chosen specialties.

Rosovsky's idea, of course, was hardly new. Schools like Columbia and Chicago had instituted ambitious programs of required courses in the twenties and thirties—while some colleges, like St. John's at Annapolis, went to the extreme of expanding their mandatory curriculum of "Great Books" to cover the entire four-year course of study. And in 1945 Harvard itself had moved in the same direction when University President James Bryant Conant issued his *General Education in a Free Society* (commonly called the "Redbook," not for its politics but for its cover), condemning creeping specialization and declaring the need for college "to fit [students], so far as it can, for those common spheres which, as citizens and heirs of a joint culture, they will share with others."

That was the rub. The Core wasn't

Peter Engel, a student at Harvard, recently completed an editorial internship at The Washington Monthly.

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Harvard's first try at assuring "a solid and shared base" of learning for its students. That battle was supposed to have been won thirty years ago. But something had happened between 1945 and 1979. By finding out what went wrong, it might be possible to judge whether Rosovsky's efforts had escaped the same fate.

Dirty Germans

Just as Columbia's "general education" program grew out of World War I, Conant's thoughts were also crystallized by a war—in his case, World War II and his sense that if Western civilization had been so easily threatened, universities had to do more to teach their students why it was worth preserving.

"There was a feeling that we'd had a very close call, that the university had a stake in a particular kind of society and it couldn't just go on its merry way," recalls Harvard professor Samuel Beer, a junior faculty member at the time. As an early Harvard precis of the Redbook put it, "The progress of a free democratic society depends on an understanding of its common aims and values."

For Conant, this meant steeping the freshman in the intellectual heritage of Western Europe. It's easy to mock this goal today—Harvard's present General Education director, Edward T. Wilcox, characterizes it as an attempt to emphasize "the triumph of democracy over godless Communists and dirty Germans." But Conant and his supporters at least had a clear conception of what America's college-educated should know, and a clear plan for teaching it.

The Redbook proposed a required curriculum consisting of foundation-laying courses in the humanities, in the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The basic humanities course would consider great works of Western literature (Homer, Greek tragedies, Plato, the Bible, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Tolstoy) while its social science counterpart would present select topics such as the Greek city-states, the Roman Empire, the Renaissance and Reformation, along with works of Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Luther, and Adam Smith. The two science courses would emphasize an historical approach to the physical sciences and biology—dramatically unfurling each new discovery, the modern cynics put it, as civilization marches ever onwards. All the courses avoided being mere chronological surveys by selecting important topics and themes for emphasis and close study. Under the plan, Harvard would still offer undergraduates the traditional huge array of specialties and "electives"—but first students would have to take the basic "general education" courses.

Even in the charged atmosphere of 1945, however, the Redbook almost went down to defeat when it came before Harvard's faculty for a vote. To appreciate what it was up against, it's worth remembering that a big university such as Harvard, like the federal government, is not a monolith. Where the government is broken up into agencies, the university is divided into departments—and, in general, the fate of any professor is tied far more closely to his department than to the university as a whole. It is the history department, with its own budget, that pays the history teacher's salary, tells him what courses he ought to teach, and must decide whether he will be given tenure. Couple this departmental focus with a career system that tells the budding scholar he must specialize, and specialize again, and you have the institutional recipe for the divisive infighting for which faculty politics is justly renowned.

In this setting, any attempt to separate out the "essentials" of knowledge will be a touchy proposition. No self-respecting professor will be inclined to permit his own field to be dismissed as superfluous to a well-rounded education. So there will be a tendency to simply leave the choice up to the individual student—a solution that has genuine libertarian appeal to many faculty members, as well as the virtue of avoiding the messy issue of deciding whose specialty falls into the "non-essential" column.

Nor is this an atmosphere in which ambitious "general education" courses are likely to flourish. Teaching a good introductory course requires a lot of work, and it requires a generalist, someone willing to spend an extra month firming up his grip on the Industrial Revolution rather than polishing off the esoteric monograph on the "frontier" of his profession that will gain him respect and recognition in his field.

In fact, the Harvard faculty defeated the Redbook's plan for a single set of required courses in the manner of Columbia and Chicago. Instead, students were allowed to

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choose between competing courses in each area—a format that Harvard has maintained ever since. But while the original "Gen Ed" program, as it was invariably called, did offer some alternatives to the student, it didn't offer many. In the Social Sciences, for example, freshmen could choose either "Soc Sci 1: The Social Inheritance of Western Civilization," or "Soc Sci 2: Western Thought and Institutions." Although the latter course emphasized ideas, and the former events, both were ambitious in scope and rigorous in treatment—and neither allowed much of an opportunity to escape exposure to the broad framework of occidental history.

It worked—for a while at least. Almost all of the eight to twelve original Gen Ed courses achieved good reputations, and some became legends, like Professor Beer's Soc Sci 2 course on "Western Thought." Two generations of students flocked to Beer's lectures, and all could probably describe, in vivid detail, the one that climaxed with his florid rendition of Voltaire's statement that "Men will not be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." Beer's students really did share a "common ground of dicourse"—no subsequent professor would ever refer to Voltaire in a lecture and stare out into a sea of uncomprehending faces.

'That's Irrelevant!'

The Redbook had been inspired by a shared postwar idealism, and as that impulse faded so did the spirit that had temporarily suppressed the divided loyalties of the faculty. "My course was always about 'free government," says Beer, "its history, its character, its future. By the 60s, if you'd asked someone to teach a course in 'free government' they would have laughed, or else they would have nodded and gone off and done something else." In general, that something else would be an attempt, not to design a better introductory course, but to corner the market in a specialty.

By 1963, when Harvard appointed a commmittee headed by biochemist Paul Doty to take another look at Gen Ed, there were ominous "staffing" problems on the horizon. It was hard to find professors willing to teach the basic Gen Ed courses, and harder to keep them there, Doty's committee report concluded, "as faculty interests changed or professors went on leave." The Doty committee also argued that the original Gen Ed courses were "anachronistic" and insufficient, particularly in that they focused on the traditions of the West. Luckily, the need for "non-Western" studies and the more mundane "staff" problems seemed to have a common solution: more courses, in "innovative areas" that the faculty would presumably be willing to teach.

Unluckily, the task of choosing those new courses threatened to reopen the divisive question of which subjects were most essential to a "liberal arts education." After a year's debate, the faculty decided not to decide and voted down Doty's specific proposals—instead giving a Committee on General Education the simple instruction to admit good, "innovative" courses to the curriculum.

The committee was soon bombarded with proposals. Many professors saw Gen Ed as a chance to escape departmental control. But the departments also had an interest in landing a few courses in the Gen Ed curriculum. Although each department tithed 10 per cent of its teaching resources to the Gen Ed program, an enterprising department chairman could regain some of the money with a little diplomatic subterfuge: by convincing the Gen Ed committee to co-sponsor a course that his department would otherwise offer by itself. Then the Gen Ed Committee would pay for half the teaching fellows—plus the course would draw more students (since it would satisfy their Gen Ed quotas), thus helping to lure more underclassmen into the department.

This last factor was particularly important to the more obscure departments, who found that having a well-attended Gen Ed course could legitimize their devotion to an offbeat field, as well as swell the ranks of their "concentrators" and the size of their budgets. Both "Afro-American Studies" and "Folklore and Mythology" achieved promotion from mere course-giving committees to full-fledged degree-granting majors partially through the popularity of their General Education offerings.

Faced with an onslaught of new proposals for Gen Ed courses, and bereft of a clear philosophy that would have allowed them to separate the essential from the non-essential, the Gen Ed Committee opted, as one professor put it, to "let a thousand flowers bloom." The number of

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Gen Ed courses exploded from 37 in 1964 to 120 in 1978. Some of the new courses were good. Others were better known for being easy—"guts" in the collegiate lingo—such as "Nat Sci 10: Earth History and Patterns," more commonly referred to as "Rocks for Jocks." Still others were "relevant," but shallow. In "Nat Sci 128: Nutrition," for example, students learned how to evaluate their own diets; "Soc Sci 9b: Interplanetary and Intercontinental Cultural Diffusion and Contact" was Harvard's answer to *Chariots of the Gods*. Then there were courses that, while perfectly worthy academic endeavors, were hardly the essential building blocks of every freshman's education. "The Making of Australia," "The Role of Women in Irish Society," and "The Classical Music of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh" fell into this category.

If the faculty proposed the courses, the students ensured their survival. As the Redbook's strict introductory regimen turned into a vast smorgasbord, undergraduates learned to pick their way through it so as to minimize the chance that they might confront a course too difficult to digest. The pre-med with an aversion to anything that might not speed him toward the Hippocratic oath could satisfy his "well-roundedness" quotient with courses like "Soc Sci 135: Science, Scientists and Society" and "Humanities 130: Problems in Medical Ethics." The pre-law student who was to science as matter is to anti-matter could also travel the well-worn escape route of "Science and Society" type courses ("Computers in Society," "Models for Control of Man's Physical Environment," "Technological Assessment," to name but three). These were not isolated examples—they numbered among the more popular courses at the college, crowded with students attracted by their flimsy reading lists, loose grading standards, and the opportunity they afforded to evade the original purpose of general education.

If you doubt whether students at a prestigious school like Harvard would be irresponsible enough to choose a poor course over a solid one, keep in mind that the avoidance of rigor has been a major undergraduate pursuit since at least the 1870s, when colleges first began offering electives. In recent years, Harvard students have asked, and received, credit for studying such weighty topics as "Sport and Political Ideology," "Auto Mechanics," "Athletic Department Management," "Scuba Diving," "Photo Essay on Mexico," and a course in "Business Management" that consisted of running the dormitory snack bar and grill.

The Faculty Pork Barrel

No wonder, then, that in the early 70s Dean Rosovsky began to wonder if something had gone wrong with Gen Ed. Especially if students were going to spend their later college years fixing cars and flipping hamburgers for credit, it must have seemed important that they first get a solid liberal arts grounding. In 1974 Rosovsky appointed a "task force" headed by James Q. Wilson to discover what needed to be done to restore the vitality of general education at Harvard. Last September—five years and two faculty debates later—the "Core Curriculum" entered Harvard life, as a beaming Rosovsky announced his expectations for its complete success.

For anyone who had hoped for a return to something like the original postwar scheme, however, the result was disappointing. In the five year span from conception to birth, the Core managed to pass through stages startlingly reminiscent of the deterioration of the Gen Ed program it was designed to replace—sort of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny.

The first sign came in the report of Wilson's initial "task force." While condemning the proliferation of courses and calling for a "fixed, and relatively small" number of courses to replace them, the report ominously echoed Doty's earlier warnings that "if the requirements are too precise and the courses that meet these requirements too few, it becomes difficult to recruit faculty to teach the essential courses." Fortunately, the report hinted, a "core curriculum" need not be made up of courses with broad topics, asking big questions. "The substantive problems addressed might be narrowly chosen as long as the methods employed were fully elaborated."

This initial "task force" report had to be reworked after the science faculty objected to the "public policy" bias built into it by government professor Wilson. The job fell to history professor Bernard Bailyn, whose report was in turn attacked for its

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What Every Student Should Know...

A science major at Harvard in 1947 would have been required to take at least two of the five full-year courses listed on the left (one from the Humanities and one from the Social Sciences). A similar student at Harvard today could fulfill its new "Core" requirement by choosing the seven half-courses listed on the right. Although the modern student would spend an extra course-and-a-half filling his basic "general education" requirement, who do you feel would have a more "solid and shared base" of knowledge?

1947

Humanities 1: Homer, the Old Testament, Plato, Dante, Montaigne, Shakespeare ("The authors... will be read and discussed as sources of our common ideas, and as great examples of ways of thinking and feeling common among us.")

Humanities 2: The Epic, the Novel (The *Iliad,* the *Odyssey,* the *Aeneid, The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Don Quixote, Candide, The Sorrows of Werther, Bleak House, Moby Dick, War and Peace.)*

Humanities 3: Individual and Social Values in Literature (Plutarch, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Johnson, Voltaire, Mann, Stendahl, Dostoevsky, Mill, Neitzsche, Malraux)

Social Sciences 1: Introduction to the Social Inheritance of Western Civilization ("The late 5th Century BC in Greece, the early 12th Century in France, the early 16th Century in Germany, the late 18th Century in Great Britain, and the late and early 20th Centuries in Western Europe and the United States.")

Social Sciences 2: Western Thought and Institutions (Early Anglo-Saxon society; the Pontificate of Innocent III, the reign of Edward I, the reign of Louis XIV, the Puritan Revolution, Germany under Bismarck, British Liberalism in the 19th Century, and Marxist Socialism. Aquinas, Bodin, Locke, Jefferson, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Bentham and Marx.)

1980

Historical Study A-11: Nationalism, Religion, and Politics in Central Eurasia: ("Traces the changes in conceptions of ethnic identity and the related changes in the bases of political action among the peoples of Central Eurasia.")

Historical Study B-36: The Emancipation of the Jews ("focusing primarily on an intensive study of the emancipation of the Jews of France in the wake of the French Revolution.")

Social Analysis 17: Women, Society and Culture ("Area focus on the Middle East and Far East.")

Moral Reasoning 19: Moderation and Extremism ("A careful examination of... the writings of Moses Maimonides, influential 12th Century Jewish philosopher.")

Literature and Arts A-14: The Pastoral Tradition: ("A study of the ancient pastoral and its continuation in the Renaissance and after.")

Literature and Arts B-15: Monuments of Asia: Sacred Buildings and Symbols ("Ways by which different conceptions of the divine in Asia were expressed in architectural and symbolic terms.")

Literature and Arts C-13: Weimar Culture ("Literary texts and other cultural developments from the period of the Weimar Republic.")

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pro-history bias. In the midst of these interdisciplinary battles, few faculty members objected as each succeeding report made it clearer that this "core" curriculum would not rely on a limited number of ambitious required courses—and all the "staffing" problems they entailed.

Instead, by the time the Core "legislation" went before the faculty for a vote, it was apparent to those who read the fine print that few professors would have to venture onto unfamiliar, unspecialized turf. As passed by the faculty, the Core plan envisioned a selection of no less than 80 to 100 courses each year, as many as the Gen Ed program had offered during its most fertile "thousand flowers" phase. But with attention focused on the battles between the scientists and non-scientists, and on the vague "core philosophy," little notice was paid to either the number or the exact content of the proposed classes.

So it wasn't clear until a year later, after eight faculty committees had chosen the first batch of "core" courses, just how far the talk of "shared experiences" had given way to the professional yen for a proliferation of esoteric topics. Eighty-four courses were chosen, with promises of more to come. They were divided into six broad areas (Literature and Arts, Historical Study, Social Analysis, Science, Foreign Cultures, and Moral Reasoning) and ten sub-categories, with students required to choose seven or eight from different subdivisions. Outside the science area, none of the courses resembles the original Redbook offerings. Instead, alongside old standbys like introductory Economics (now "Social Analysis 10") are such essentials of every educated man's repertoire as "Tuberculosis in the 19th Century" and "Nationalism, Religion, and Politics in Central Eurasia."

To avoid faculty squabbling, the list of courses appears to have been drawn up in much the same manner that the House Public Works Committee draws up the annual roll call of water projects. There is the obligatory bow to the Afro-American Studies caucus ("Black Literary Movements of the Early 20th Century") and the Jewish lobby ("Historical Study B-36: The Emanicipation of the Jews"; "Moral Reasoning 19. . . a careful analysis of . . . the writings of Moses Maimonides, influential 12th century Jewish philosopher"). But no department, it seems, has been turned away from this faculty pork barrel empty-handed—particularly not the obscure "foreign studies" departments, well-represented by titles like "The Novel in East Asia" or "Turn of the Century Austrian Culture."

The Core As a Genre

But wait. . . there is method in this madness, or at least Harvard claims there is. Because what is "revolutionary" about the Core, it seems, is precisely that it purports to achieve the goals of "general education" by offering a large array of courses on *narrow* topics. "There is just too much information" for any other approach, says Rosovsky. So a "Core course" forsakes breadth of scope in order to emphasize "modes of thought," "distinctive ways of thinking." Even if the topic at hand is something as arcane as "Chivalric Romances of the Middle Ages," Core students will learn the "particular modes of apprehending and articulating experience" embodied in the romances, ultimately gaining an appreciation of "how great authors have contrived distinctive statements about timeless and universal aspects of human experience." Got it? With a similar argument, one professor pushed to have a course on Chinese art included in the Core, emphasizing that because the course was called "*The* Chinese Painting," instead of just "Chinese Painting," it would treat the paintings as an entity, a genre, rather than conduct a mere survey. (Alas, the catalogue-writers failed to grasp this subtlety, and the course now appears as "Literature and Arts B-11: Chinese Painting.") Harvard even went so far as to deliberately exclude from the Core some courses—such as "Introduction to the History of Art"—that tackled broad topics.

Getting a handle on this "core philosophy" isn't easy, so heavily larded is it with academic hokum. "Broadly stated," reads Rosovsky's final report to the faculty," the goal of the Core is to encourage a critical appreciation of the major *approaches* to knowledge, so that students may acquire an understanding of what *kinds* of knowledge exist in certain important areas, how such knowledge is *created,* how it is *used,* and *what it might mean* to them personally"—acquire everything, it appears, except the knowledge itself.

In the end, it's hard to avoid the

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conclusion that such talk is, at bottom, an elaborate ruse to avoid facing the fact that there are few professors at Harvard who are willing to teach an introductory blockbuster like "Western Thought and Institutions" (Professor Beer retired two years ago and his course was not revived for the Core), only a lot of professors willing to expatiate on their specialty, be it "The Thirty Years' War," "Chinese Painting," or "Monuments of Asia." All the Core asks is that they wrap their small sausages of knowledge in thick casings of "method" and "context." So the expert on Urdu poetry extends his course description by noting that "Contextual considerations include relevant social, political, and religious phenomena," and he has a class that fits into the essential group of "intellectual experiences [that] should be required of all students." Thus is a revolution in education made.

More important, when compared to a mandatory set of basic readings—be they Columbia's or Conant's—Harvard's loose "modes of thought" approach pales as a mean of assuring "a solid and shared base of general and liberal education." After the faculty got through divvying up the Core pie, Harvard students could forget all the talk about "shared experience" or "a common ground of discourse." There is nothing in the Core that requires any two Harvard graduates to have been exposed to the same book or author in their four-year terms. Plato may still be easily avoided, as may Shakespeare, to say nothing of Voltaire. Rather, the Core assures that every student will fill his satchel with discrete samplings from specialties all over the academic lot. Where is the "common ground" between two science majors, one who satisfied his "historical study" quota by taking "The

Meanwhile: No Teachers at Columbia...

Shortly after the beginning of World War I, two Columbia professors, John Dewey and Frederick Woodbridge, were asked by the government to draw up a syllabus for a course entitled "War Issues," which was taught at every Student Army Training Center. As the war progressed, various faculty members began planning a course to be called "Peace Issues," which was to be the post-war equivalent of Dewey and Woodbridge's course. About the same time, another professor, John Erskine, proposed an upper-class course that consisted of the reading and discussion of one "classic" a week. The product of all these efforts, in 1919, was Columbia's required freshman course in "Contemporary Civilization," which is still given, and still required, today.

"CC," as it is inevitably called, is described as a "study in their historical context of major contributions to the intellectual tradition in the West." In the first semester, students read works by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Luther, Hobbes, and Locke; the second half includes Rousseau, Adam Smith, J.S. Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. A counterpart to CC is a mandatory year-long Humanities course, in which a typical reading list includes Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes, Herodotus, and Thucydides, on through Dante, *King Lear*, and the *Brothers Karamazov*.

So, unlike Harvard, Columbia's general education curriculum remains intact from 30—and in some respects 60—years ago. The reading lists are impressive, the workload heavy. Unfortunately, the courses are but faint images of their lofty predecessors.

The reason is teaching. The prestige that once drew Columbia's best scholars—men such as Lionel Trilling, Mark Van Doren, and Jacques Barzun—to teach CC or Humanities no longer exists. Today, few professors want to be burdened with the responsibilities imposed by the course. After all, they have to read all those books too, and learning them well enough to teach is unlikely to bring many professional rewards. The attitude of most faculty members was summed up by one professor who confessed "The first thing you try to do when you get tenure is to 'liberate' yourself from teaching CC." As recruiting faculty has grown increasingly difficult, the task of running CC has been passed down to graduate students—frequently bright and dedicated, but lacking experience in one area: teaching.

—*James Lyons*

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Emancipation of the Jews," and the other by "Tuberculosis in the 19th Century?"

Nor is it clear that a narrowly focused course, even on such an important period as "Britain: 1640-1660," can do the job of a more ambitious venture that, as Columbia historian Jacques Barzun described it, "gives the student a good running start from the Thirteenth Century" to the present. No matter how much "perspective" and "context" and "method of approach" the historian may load into his two precious decades, he is still talking about a 20-year span. If you visualize the academic enterprise as a vast archaeological dig, with scholars chipping away at the frontiers of knowlege, one approach takes the student to an observation tower at the center, where he can see the vast sweep of the enterprise, the most important questions being asked, the places where progress has been made and where, on the contrary, the landscape is shrouded in mystery. The "Core" approach whisks the student directly up to the rock face, hands him a shovel and a pickaxe, and tells him to start digging. "These are my tools," says his specialist guide, "and this is what it's like doing my job."

But while a few months trying out various pickaxes may give the student a good idea of what it is like to be, say, a historian at a modern university, it is unlikely to afford him a means of assessing the methods he is being taught, or of thinking up new methods to apply to new problems. That would require some perspective, the ability to analyze various "approaches"—for history, they might be Marxism, "idealism," or "technological determinism"—in both their attempted abstract formulations and across a variety of applications. Instead, the Core's working image of scholarship is that of

. . . And a Pass/Fail Smorgasbord at Yale

Yale, unlike either Harvard or Columbia, has consistently pursued a relatively pure "smorgasbord" approach to general education. Through the years, Yale's courses have simply been divided into various "distributional groups," and students have been required to take a certain number of courses (usually two semesters) from each category. No special "general education" courses are offered, much less any *required* introductory courses.

The major changes over the years have been in the number of categories. In 1946 there were six, which dwindled to three in 1966: Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. In 1971, the Humanities grouping underwent mitosis, and the four resulting areas were ambitiously renamed I, II, III, and IV. At the same time, students were relieved of the obligation to take *any* courses in two of the categories. Yale's method had always made it easy for the intrepid student to pick the most familiar, or the easiest, course in the catalogue in order to fill his "distribution" quota. But now he could skip the Social Sciences altogether and still graduate *summa cum laude*. This was probably the high water mark of "permissiveness" in a very permissive system.

This year, Yale President A. Bartlett Giamatti put his foot down. Announcing his intention to promote ". . . a liberal education whose intellectual core is a required curriculum and whose purpose is the development of students who can make rational, humane, informed choices," he once again required students to take a full year's course in each "distributional group."

But even turning the clock back all the way to 1970 won't guarantee Yale students who can make "rational, humane, informed choices." Indeed, the attitude of students toward the reshuffled requirements is often evasion and aversion. For example, the humanities major who despises science will usually take one of the low-level science courses such as Physics 110a ("Physics for Poets"), Astronomy 110a ("astro-gut"), or Engineering and Applied Sciences 120a (rated by students as having a "definite lack of intellectual stimulation"). Since he can take these unchallenging courses under a "credit/fail" option, he is unlikely to waste too much time on them.

—*Walter Jacob*

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data processing—it will, as Harvard dean Phyllis Keller gushed to *The Washington Post*, help undergraduates approach "the wide diversity of fragmented information students will be forced to cope with in the 21st century." After studying his snippet of history, the student may be able to look at any other decade and "cope" with its "information" the way his professor taught him. What he will find it hard to do is determine if those methods are the best ways to look at that decade, think of new methods, or judge whether the study of either period is worth the effort.

Pilgrims' Progress

Papers like the *Post* were justifiably interested in Harvard's campaign, because Harvard has often been the engine of academic fashion. It was Conant's Redbook, and not the earlier, bolder Columbia and Chicago experiments, that started the "general education revolution." When Harvard initiated a "freshman seminar" program in 1963, it quickly became what one breathless surveyer called "the most popular, fastest growing structure in freshman education." So when Harvard deans began to boast of "the first successful effort in 20 years to establish a new consensus on general educational priorities," the press listened. Any reform in Cambridge might be rapidly diffused by eager imitators throughout the nation's university system.

The process appeared to be starting all over again as teachers and administrators from around the country traveled to Cambridge to interview Harvard's faculty and factoti about "The Core." That's what Susan Wakefield did. But, unlike her counterparts in previous generations, Wakefield won't be starting up an imitation of Harvard's innovation in Utah. By the time the Harvard faculty was through with the Core, Wakefield said, she "could find no direct link between the Core philosophy and the courses" the students would actually be taught. Instead of a bold statement, she found the new curriculum's dominant theme to be "political expedience."

However Harvard's reform is perceived by other colleges, the publicity generated by all the apparent change will help Harvard in at least one way: money. After the Core Curriculum was announced, Harvard initiated a quarter-billion dollar fund-raising drive imaginatively titled "The Core Campaign." (Later the name was changed to "The Harvard Campaign.") The drive kicked off last fall with the slogan: "Wanted: $250 million to strengthen the core of the university." It's not hard to see what is going on here. Many college alumni dearly want to believe that the "do-your-own-thing" days of the 60s are indeed over, that their college has taken a stride comparable to Columbia's after World War I (see box) or Conant's in 1945. They will give money—in Harvard's case, lots of money—to see this come about. And Harvard will make it easy for them, with rhetoric ("basic literacy in major forms of discourse," "shared base of knowledge," "core") that plays on the hope that Harvard has abandoned the smorgasbord approach and decided to ensure that its students graduate with the minimum amount of knowledge that it feels everyone, in this culture at least, should share. Few alumni can be expected to examine the Core closely enough to realize that Rosovsky's reform has succeeded largely in rearranging the trays of hors d'oeuvres on the undergraduate's table.

That's one disturbing element of Harvard's recent "revolution"—the inescapable tinge of false advertising, of cynical hype. We expect it from politicians, but not from the tweedy dons of Cambridge. Which leads to another, equally disturbing aspect of the Core story: the almost uncanny way the government of one of our great colleges exhibits the major problems that plague our national government, writ small. When Rosovsky says "there is just too much information" to return to Conant's scheme, it would be charitable to interpret his statement this way: There are too many faculty members, specializing in obscure realms of information, whom he has to please. In 1947 Harvard had about 340 professors in 28 departments. Today it has 733 professors and 54 departments. They all want their share. And not many of them are willing to decide that a familiarity with Urdu poetry may not be essential to an American citizen, but a knowledge of basic economics is. As a result, after a half-decade of task force reports, interdepartmental committees, and faculty votes, all that is left, as one professor put it, is Dean Rosovsky parading before alumni and press in an emperor's new clothes. ■

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room to stretch than in any of the other 134 suites—all for $125. Prices of the others range from $77 (sleeping and sitting area in the same room) to $81-$89 (sleeping nooks or full bedrooms). Additional persons, $10 each; children under 12, free; parking, $3 a night. One Washington Circle and River Inn (see below) are the only Foggy Bottom hotels with weekend specials. At One Washington Circle, for $54 per person you get a suite for two nights, a free ticket to a theater performance, breakfasts served in your suite, a bottle of champagne, and all the other amenities of the hotel. (There's no room charge for children under 12—but their tickets and breakfasts are extra.) The hotel provides meeting space for 80 in its "conference center" room, or can set up a suite to accommodate smaller gatherings.

There are also two new restaurants—the informal **Beaujolais** cafe and the more posh **Champagne**, which offers you an elegant decor along with a *prix fixe* menu from which you can select one of three cuisine specialties for $16. The room service menu includes items from both restaurants.

The River Inn, 924 25th Street, N.W., (202) 337-7600. Under the same management and similar in style to One Washington Circle, the River Inn costs a little less but also offers a little less: no balconies, no pool (there's a sun deck on the roof), no room service. The hotel's contribution to area cuisine is the **Foggy Bottom Cafe,** an attractive place serving breakfast, lunch and dinner at very reasonable prices. Accommodations at River Inn come in two varieties: one-room (combined sleeping/sitting area) for $68, and one-bedroom for $80. Add $4 for a view of the Potomac; $3 a night for parking. Additional persons in room, $10 each; children under 12, free. There's a weekend special here, too: $44 per person covers two nights, free Tourmobile sightseeing tickets, free parking, and two children under 14, if you have any. And like One Washington Circle, the hotel can set suites up for small meetings.

Dine by the fireplace in the most charming setting in downtown Washington...

1734 N Street N.W. (737-1370)

Riverside Towers, 2201 Virginia Avenue, N.W., (202) 452-4600. If you have business at State, the World Health Organization, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and don't feel like doing much walking to get there, this is the place for you. The hotel has been through a fortuitous refurbishing: the salmon colored kitchens are now white, there is new carpeting, and much of the old traditional hotel furniture has been replaced—by *new* traditional furniture. About a third of the rooms have balconies, but anyone can enjoy the Potomac overlook from the sun deck on the roof.

If you need an incentive to do your own cooking, you'll find it here. No room service, no restaurant in the hotel, and few nearby worth mentioning. But the room rates are reasonable (by Washington standards) and if you're allergic to pets or children under 18, you'll be pleased to learn that they're barred. Efficiencies (sleep sofa): single, $35; double, $38. Studios (one room with bed and living area): single, $40; double, $45. One bedroom: single and double, $55. Additional persons in room: from $3 to $8 each, depending on facilities. Weekly, monthly, and group rates available. Limited parking, $3 a night.

Restaurants

Either Foggy Bottom has so few restaurants because most of the hotels provide their guests with kitchens, or most of the hotels provide kitchens because Foggy Bottom has so few restaurants. Someday Congress will probably give someone a contract to study this question. Meanwhile, the pickings are slim:

Along Pennsylvania Avenue you'll find several restaurants styled as neighborhood pubs—such as **Marshall's West End,** 2525 Pennsylvania, which has good pasta and hamburgers; **Sarsfield's,** 2524 L Street, where you won't find Hamilton Jordan any more; and half a dozen others, all in the 2100 block of Pennsylvania, where George Washington University students and the after-work singles crowd hang out among the beer and burgers.

Two Italian restaurants worth your while are **DaVinci's,** 2514 Pennsylvania, where the pasta and daily specials are good and reasonably priced (it's next door to the Guest Quarters at 2500 Pensylvania); if you're looking for a bit more luxury, go a block over to **Ponte Vecchio** at 2555 M Street. You'll be served excellent pasta and entrees in an elegant setting—and charged accordingly.

At 2133 Pennsylvania is **Le Gaulois,** with fine French food, reasonable prices, too many tables crammed together, and too much noise. They serve Cecil Andrus his rattlesnake meat at **Dominique's,** 1900 Pennsylvania, but that's not why this restaurant has a devoted following. The food is prepared with loving care and served with style... at premium prices.

—*Carol Trueblood*

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What CREEP proposed, Congress has perfected

Nixon's PACs Americana

by William T. Mayton

George Steinbrenner traditionally supported Democratic candidates for the presidency. But then in early 1972 he received a visit from Herbert Kalmbach, the personal lawyer of President Nixon. The president, Kalmbach said, was going to win big in November, and it would behoove Steinbrenner to arrange a "very substantial" contribution to the Committee for the Reelection of the President (CREEP) in order to be assured of "input" at the White House during the second Nixon administration. Kalmbach suggested that a donation of $100,000 would do nicely.

In another time George Steinbrenner might have told the president's lawyer to go play in traffic. But in 1972 he had a vexing problem. His American Shipbuilding Company had run afoul of the government. Questions of cost overruns and quality control had been raised in connection with a ship the company had built for the Coast Guard. Moreover, American Shipbuilding had recently been named in an anti-trust action filed by the Justice Department. No question about it, input at the White House would be worth something. Steinbrenner concluded that it would be worth $100,000, and he told Kalmbach the money would be coming.

Direct corporate contributions to political campaigns have been outlawed since 1907, but corporations had long since developed an easy way to circumvent the law. Turning to his junior executives, Steinbrenner explained that "many companies secure funds for contributions through the granting of bonuses to employees." American Shipbuilding thereupon began rewarding its loyal employees—the only hitch being that the loyal employees had to give their rewards to the Nixon campaign. In due course Steinbrenner delivered $100,000to Kalmbach's office.

The people at CREEP were understandably jubilant about the prospects for what they euphemistically called the "Corporate Group Solicitation Program." They believed they had found an essentially foolproof system for extracting millions of dollars from major corporations without serious risk of prosecution.

The formula—conveniently recorded by CREEP in its final reports after the 1972 campaign—was simplicity itself. A corporation's chief executive officer would solicit contributions (one to two per cent of an employee's salary was the recommended amount) and then these contributions were to be submitted to Nixon's operatives in one lump sum, *from the corporation,* so as to "maximize recognition" of the corporation.

The report emphasized that there were "important nuances" to the program. One involved getting junior executives to contribute generously. CREEP suggested that the chief executive should take pains to communicate forcefully his own strong preference for the incumbent administra-

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tion. He should also make a point of taking names and keeping lists; a system of anonymous contributions just wouldn't do, said CREEP: "Comparative results by those corporations using [an anonymous system] and those that did not make it extremely clear that the latter system should be used." This was White House jargon for an older, pithier aphorism known to anyone who's raised funds for the United Way: "When the boss knows, the money flows."

Another implicit "nuance" involved the delicate question of how to tap into corporate funds without getting caught. Here the record suggests the answer: it was the Steinbrenner Solution. The cooperating company should simply give employees bonuses or salary increases, recovering the surplus later in the form of "voluntary" contributions to the White House. (This was also the General Motors solution, as described by John De Lorean on page 26 of this issue.) The contributing company need not be especially troubled that this technique involved a crime—a subterfuge, a laundering of corporate funds—because it was a crime not likely to be discovered.

If there was risk, it must have seemed well worthwhile. CREEP's statisticians had estimated that the application of the "Corporate Group Solicitation Program" to just 500 corporations would yield at least $20 million—and over time the program could be expanded far beyond that.

The only sticking point, CREEP's report said, was that some corporation counsels had expressed reservations about the legality of the program, and as a result several promising companies had not contributed in 1972. CREEP thought this could be resolved by changing the law to "clarify" that the establishing of corporate programs to solicit junior management employees was permissible and that corporations could use their funds to cover the administrative costs of the program. CREEP thought it would also be a good idea to fix the law so that companies with government contracts would have the same right to solicit contributions from salaried employees.

But surely, you say, this is ancient history now. We know what happened to CREEP and its mentors. They are all scattered to the four winds, writing books and finding new meaning in the scriptures, and the Republic is safe because Congress has long since made sure that this kind of filth is forever barred from our shores.

Congress has done no such thing. On the contrary: after Watergate, after many rounds of hearings and debates, after passing new laws and amendments, Congress has managed to make CREEP's plan the law of the land. The only essential difference involves a name change: What used to be the "Corporate Group Solicitation Program" has been reincarnated almost intact as the "Corporate Political Action Committee."

As such, corporate political action committees (PACs) are no new phenomenon. Politicians have been fulminating about them for years. Ted Kennedy warns that they have "created the best Congress money can buy." Jimmy Carter says they worry him too. Congressmen galore claim to be heartsick over the influence of PACs on all kinds of legislation. What they *don't* claim is responsibility for this state of affairs. But in the game of corporate-political extortion as it's played today, congressmen are the prime movers.

The 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act—the law CREEP proposed fiddling with—prohibited corporations from soliciting political funds from anyone other than their stockholders. Since stockholders are notoriously impervious to corporate pleas (most of them never even check off the proxy forms designating the people they support for the board of directors), few companies troubled themselves to set up PACs while the restrictions of the 1971 law remained in effect.

In the wake of Watergate, Congress made all kinds of appropriate noises about closing loopholes and battening hatches to seal off the democratic process from the toxic fumes of bribery. But one of its own creations—the Federal Election Commission—issued a ruling in 1975 entirely in line with what CREEP had proposed. The FEC interpreted an amendment to the 1971 law as sanctioning the use of corporate funds to set up and administer PACs. More importantly, the FEC said corporations were free to solicit employees as well as stockholders. Within six months after the ruling, more than 150 corporations had set up PACs. A trickle of corporate money into the political arena became a fast-flowing stream and then a flood. Today there are more than 950 corporate PACs, and in the 1978 congressional elections more than $17 million came in from them—twice the amount contributed in

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1976. The process seems bound to continue developing momentum, if only because about three fourths of the *Fortune* 500—the largest manufacturing and merchandising companies in America—haven't gotten around to setting up PACs of their own.

This situation has been causing sustained consternation among election reformers. In 1976 they beseeched Congress to undo the damage wrought by the FEC. The upshot was a classic compromise—an amended Federal Elections Campaign Act theoretically restraining corporate PACs by limiting their sphere of solicitation. Not only has this limitation turned out to be meaningless, but the compromise has helped sanctify a system of contributions based on coercion. Nearly every effort since Watergate to steer the political process away from sin has locked it more rigidly to the course laid out by CREEP.

I Want Three Volunteers. . .

The corporate PACs authorized by the 1976 FECA meet every "nuance" that CREEP discussed. The law clearly gives senior corporate officers the right to solicit funds from "executives and administrative employees"—a category vaguely defined by Congress as those people within the corporation who are "paid by salary and who have policy-making, managerial, professional, or supervisory responsibilities." That can be construed to cover almost anyone who isn't carrying a union card or sweeping floors. Automatic payroll deduction is permitted; thus the amount levied can be easily tied to the size of the employee's salary, and detection of phony bonuses and salary increases becomes even more difficult. The operating costs of the PAC may be paid from the corporate treasury, and the corporation itself has the authority to decide which candidates will receive PAC funds. Moreover, the law permits corporations with government contracts to operate PACs. A bill drafted by CREEP could hardly have been much more inclusive.

And it works precisely as CREEP would have wanted. FEC records show, first, that more than 90 per cent of the money disbursed by corporate PACs comes from employee contributions. The stockholders remain immune; the junior execs are sitting ducks. Debating the law in 1976, Congress was well aware of this problem—but in the end the issue was addressed only by language specifying that corporate donations cannot be extracted by threats of force or reprisal.

Language like this clearly comes straight from the Walt Disney School of Politics—wish upon a star and all your dreams will come true. It has very little to do with the realities of the corporate world, where reprisal can take the form of simply freezing an executive into a job slot, transferring him from the Bahamas to Buffalo in mid-winter, denying him access to the Learjet or otherwise chilling his aspirations in myriad ways beyond the detection of Congress.

Thus the law, as it operates today, gives carte blanche to corporate coercion. But, even more strikingly, it also institutionalizes *political* coercion exactly as CREEP had intended.

Much fuss has been made about corporate money supporting ideological campaigns—and some of it does, in highly-publicized efforts such as the current right-wing targeting of Senators McGovern, Church, and Culver. Ideological forays like these draw a lot of attention, but they also draw our attention away from the much less discussed fact that such campaigns are the exception rather than the rule. For the most part, corporate PACs serve as giant money machines for powerful incumbents—just as CREEP intended, back in the days when Richard Nixon thought incumbency was his to keep.

In the wake of Watergate, corporate president after corporate president testified that they authorized illegal contributions to the Nixon campaign not because they supported Nixon on principle but because they were afraid of him. This is hardly surprising; large corporations are unusually susceptible to pressure from the federal government—because of the web of federal subsidies, taxes, and regulations in which they are ensnared, and because the federal government is often a primary customer for their products and services. Many corporate campaign contributions in 1972 were made strictly in hopes of buying peace.

FEC's records for the 1978 congressional campaigns show that the same rule

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applies with equal force today. The only difference is that in a non-presidential election year, all the money flows to Capitol Hill instead of to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Moreover, the records show that the money flows more and more to incumbents without regard to party. The received wisdom, of course, is that businessmen vote for Republicans. Maybe so, but in 1978 business PACs accounted for more than 60 per cent of the money received by the *Democratic* National Committee. Democratic incumbents received more than twice as much money from business as from labor.

This gives us a meaningful clue as we search for an answer to that old question: If congressmen are so indignant about all that filthy money swirling around their feet, why don't they *do* something about it?

To bring the problem under control, it isn't necessary for Congress to do anything as drastic as outlawing PACs altogether, even though that might be a very good idea. All Congress has to do is go back to the original language of the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act—prohibiting corporate PACs from soliciting funds from anyone except corporate stockholders. This would force corporations to work much harder for their PAC money; they would have less of it to play with; their employees would no longer be subject to political coercion; and some degree of equity would be restored—in the political clout of capital and labor, and in the fund-raising abilities of incumbents and challengers.

But that's the hooker, of course. Congress is made up exclusively of incumbents. They remember what it took to get there and they are in no great hurry to leave. Congressmen are not likely to strip themselves voluntarily of the advantages of incumbency. But until they do, they will perpetuate the very same kind of double shakedown for which they so roundly and rightly condemned Richard Nixon. Congress could chortle over Watergate because it was Nixon's misfortune. Now that his wretched excesses have been adopted as the law of the land, you shouldn't have much trouble figuring out where that last spectral laugh is coming from. ■

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Richard Reeves on political books

John Marshall was doing what he usually did in the afternoons. He was flying a kite, the big blue one he had made when he was a boy back in Germantown, Virginia. Kite-flying was serious business for Marshall, his clerks knew—especially the clerks who had to hold the string while the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court went inside the building to write opinions.

"The Brothers." The name had been given to them by one of the clerks, a young Harvard man named Simon Schuster. Marshall, the Chief, called "Sheriff" behind his lean back because of the pistol he kept in the third drawer on the left side of his desk. William Cushing, the nervous trial lawyer from Massachusetts who had made his reputation defending short-changing toll bridge operators back home. William Paterson, the cheery conservative whose father had changed his name to honor the New Jersey city where he had discovered his favorite game, Whist. Samuel Chase, the last surviving appointee of George Washington, feeble now, sometimes interrupting judicial conferences to shout, "God save the king!" Bushrod Washington, the first court appointment of John Adams, the great scholar of the court when he showed up. Unfortunately, he had not shown up in four years, since 1799. And Alfred Moore, the North Carolinian who delighted in surprising visitors to the court by offering to clean up after their horses "like that dummy, the Chief, always makes me do when it's decision-writing time."

•

"Marbury?" Moore said to Cushing. "Who's Marbury?"

The justices were sitting in the cluttered, greenish living room of the boarding house near the court run by Count Fleabert. They liked the Count's because Cushing loved to look at the paintings of foxes on the greenish walls.

"Bill, you're the guy who likes foxes.

Richard Reeves is the author of Convention. *His column is a regular feature of* The Washington Monthly.

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McGee's growth from a small partnership, which pioneered the offshore oil well, to a mighty conglomerate. Ezzell, who teaches at Oklahoma, says this could only happen in America. Where else could humble farmboy Robert Kerr rise to be a business leader and later a corrupt senator? Where else could farmboy inventor Dean McGee devise innovative strategies for plutonium distribution? And where else but in America can you get away with this stuff and then be immortalized by a Ph.D. from Harvard?

The Invisible Victim: The Criminal Justice System's Forgotten Responsibility. *Robert Reiff. Basic ($11.95).*

An Invitation to Our Times. *Mitchell S. Ross, Doubleday ($8.95).* Mitchell Ross opens his book with this declaration: "Show me the man who will state 'the national condition' and I will show you a fool." Guess what he goes on to state.

The national condition, according to Ross, is that we suffer from a "mystique of freedom." It's an engaging notion. Does Ross get bogged down, like most pop culture books, in citing contrived examples to support his theory? No—he presents no evidence whatsoever, he just goes on. This certainly cuts out the middleman. What is the "mystique of freedom?" I dunno. Neither does he.

Assembling a loose collection of essays, Ross discusses—well, if it made the front pages, he's got it. The Meaning of Vietnam. Blacks in Perspective. Overrating the Women's Movement. Suburban Malaise. It's all here. Sometimes he shows insight—he says the seasoned stew of people passing through a suburban shopping mall makes it "as fascinating in its way as an Arabian bazaar." But mostly he deals in obvious stuff—like vicious attacks on Reich's *Greening of America* and Toffler's *Future Shock*, lightweight books blown over long ago. Against sandcastles he brings up a howitzer.

Too bad, because Ross has some nice touches. He describes his father, vacationing in Jamaica, spying Martin Luther King on the beach and worming his way into a photo with the man. There Ross's father stands, shirt untucked and Polaroid dangling, agog over King. Who could fail to charm with such a tale? Ross. He tries to use the story as a lurching lead for a litany of Blacks-in-Perspective cliches that might have been plucked straight from a *Time* essay.

Despite the author's indulgences and his editor's failures, this book conveys the message that Ross, at 25, has talent. If he breaks away from global generalizing and begins to look at the small and fragile ticks of time that are a good writer's concern, he may have something to tell us. So remember Ross's name even as you try to forget *An Invitation to Our Times.*

—Gregg Easterbrook

Jimmy Carter: A Character Portrait. *Bruce Mazlish and Edwin Diamond. Simon & Schuster ($11.95).*

Mondale: Portrait of an American Politician. *Findlay Lewis. Harper & Row ($10.95).*

Mongolia's Culture and Society. *Sechin Jagchid and Paul Hyer. Westview ($30).*

My Home, My Prison. *Raymonda Tawil. Holt, Rinehart and Winston ($12.95).*

The NARC's Game: Organizational and Informational Limits on Drug Law Enforcement. *Peter K. Manning. MIT Press ($19.95).* This book, researched under a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant, tells you things like the different ways to round up the suspects. There are, for instance, subtle distinctions between the Agent-Informant Mode of Targeting and the Citizen-Dominant Mode of Targeting. *The streets are dead, Sarge. The pigeons ain't squawking, every turn we take is a blind alley, and we haven't got a lead Columbo could follow. We gotta switch to the Citizen-Dominant Mode of Targeting.* The research is inclusive; of the anonymous tip-off call, Manning explains: "Drug officers believe that one can never tell about a call. It could yield a major case, seizure, or a lead irrelevant to a current investigation."

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The Networks. *A. Frank Reel. Scribner's ($8.95).* It's common knowledge that television's performance has never lived up to its promise. Reel thinks he knows why: if the Federal Communications Commission had adopted a plan for UHF stations back in 1947, instead of opting for the VHF plan with all its limitations and overtones of monopoly, the world of television would have been a much more democratic, inquisitive, and informative place.

This is an interesting idea, but it didn't originate with Reel. That's the trouble with the whole book—it's a collection of borrowed ideas, and since Reel doesn't even squirt them with a dose of fresh thinking, the reader comes away with a dusty sense of *deja vu*. The features in the back of *TV Guide* have said it all before, and better. Reel—a former president of Metromedia Producers Association—should have been willing to deviate from other people's scripts long enough to give us the benefit of his own expertise.

—Reed Phillips

On A Clear Day You Can See General Motors: John Z. DeLorean's Look Inside the Automotive Giant. *J. Patrick Wright. Wright Enterprises ($12.95).* An excerpt appears on page 26 of this issue.

A People's History of the United States. *Howard Zinn. Harper and Row ($17.50).*

Rehabilitating America: Toward Independence for Disabled and Elderly People. *Frank Bowe. Harper and Row ($10.95).*

Setting Municipal Priorities 1980. *Raymond Horton and Charles Brecher, eds. Allanheld/Universe ($24).*

The Third Century: America as a Post-Industrial Society. *Seymour M. Lipset, ed. Hoover ($14.95).*

The Unexpected Minority: Handicapped Children in America. *John Gliedman and William Roth. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich ($17.95).* This book details the problems faced by handicapped children. It suggests that, by design, they are made to feel "inferior" in ways entirely unrelated to their physical handicaps. It also claims to have discovered "a remarkable new way of looking at handicapped people: they are a discriminated-against minority, like blacks."

The United States and Six Atlantic Outposts: Military and Economic Considerations. *Edward W. Chester. Kennikat ($17.50).*

Up the Down Dollar: A Realist's Guide to the Marketplace. *Edward Meadows. Anchor Press/Doubleday ($10.95).* Economics is sup-

continued on page 64

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- The *Washington Post*'s exclusive on the confessions of ex-Senator Maryon Allen... and the two major wire services that were intimidated into *not* running the story.
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posed to be the "story of the 1980s." Can't we just skip to the story of the 1990s? The 1980s just started and already it's getting tepid.

Edward Meadows's contribution begins with this theory: we are collapsing under the weight of our own wealth. Technology and free enterprise, sometimes blessings, have recessive genes now expressing themselves in frightful mutations. We've heard this before, but it's not conventional liberalism yet, and it's worth knowing more about.

So Meadows tells us about economics—about monopoly, about pollution, about lending and inflation. It's a useful and balanced survey, not bogged down with dogma about the multinationals forcing french fries on nomadic tribespersons. If you're not versed in economics, it will tell you things you need to know. But it won't tell you anything about the mutant-capitalism theory. After the first chapter, Meadows drops it in favor of the catalog of ills. Why is it happening now? What touched it off? How can it be changed? Questions unanswered.

Worse, the book begins with the obligatory "mood of our times" thing. This needless spiel threatens to drag the book down with it. Explaining what Vietnam protestors really were after as they milled about the Mall, Meadows writes: "The fun was later consorting with a pretty blue-jeaned blonde who, in the spirit of the times, gave freely of herself." Aw, gimme a break. Lines like that make you wince for reasons other than their being sophomoric. Romance is a much more important topic in the conduct of people's lives than adjusted GNP and a new look at Galbraith. If Meadows debases something that really matters with such a sleazy shrug, how can you trust his judgment on anything else?

The mood-ring chapter also imperils his credibility. Based on a quote in *Interview*, he condemns the "high princess of disco," Nacha Guevara, for saying she likes clothes. "If *Interview* has any politics at all," he writes, "they are the politics of upper-middle class social conservatism, a la Guevara." Maybe he's never seen Guevara perform. She wears plain garments and sings—mostly in Spanish and often a cappela—enchanting ballads not even remotely disco. More important, maybe he doesn't know she was recently expelled from her native Argentina for advocating socialism.

—*G. E.*

World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States. *Paul L. Murphy. Norton ($16.95).*

The Writing on the Wall: Inside Higher Education in America. *Gail Thain Parker. Simon & Schuster ($9.95).* The author writes with too little passion and too much quotation, but she is right enough—about what is wrong with tenure, credentialism, and adult education—to make her book must reading.

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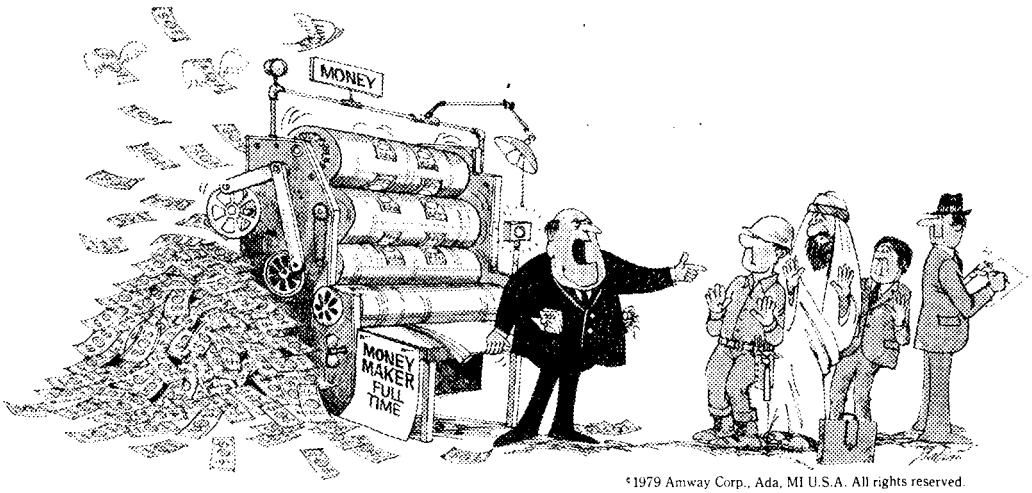
Inflation can be cured



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...if our leaders admit the cause.

If you think you're getting straight talk about inflation, you're wrong! That is because some politicians and many of those in the media—two principal sources of information about inflation—cannot seem to get it straight themselves.

First, they blamed wage increases and price hikes for inflation. Then, when "voluntary guidelines" were established, the blame shifted to OPEC oil prices. Both explanations were wrong.

Government policy is responsible for inflation...paying for deficit spending by "creating money" out of thin air. That debases the currency...makes every dollar *worth less*. That's inflation. Not wage increases. Not price increases. Not OPEC oil.

If oil prices caused inflation, Germany and Japan would have double-digit inflation, too. West Germany imports about 97 percent of its oil. Its inflation rate is 6.6 percent. Japan imports 99 percent of its oil. Its inflation rate is 6.9 percent. But the United States imports slightly less than *half* of its oil *and has controlled the price of domestic oil since 1971.* Our inflation rate is 13 percent.*

It is important to understand the *cause* of inflation in order to cure it. But when certain elected representatives and some of those who report the news seem unable to differentiate between inflation and the *result* of inflation—the increased cost of living—there is little hope that the disease can be cured. Unless government fiscal policy is reformed— the budget brought into balance and deficits eliminated— inflation will continue to rage out of control. It's time those of our leaders who are looking for scapegoats stop doing so and start paying the price for political promises. Amway Corporation, Ada, MI 49355.

*Sources: Joint Economic Committee of Congress and Department of Energy.

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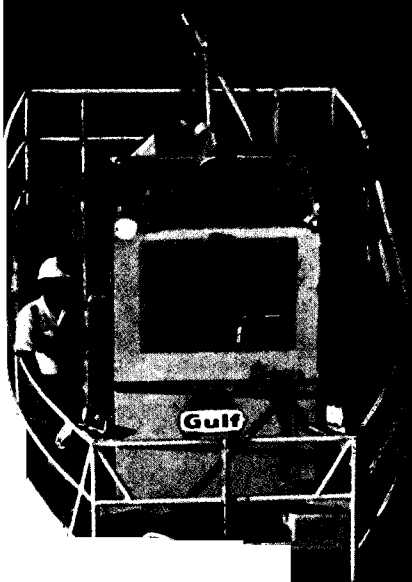

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